The Life of a CHRISTIAN

WHICH IS.

A Lamp kindled and lighted from the Love of Christ, and most naturally discovereth its Original, by the purity, integrity and fervency of its motion, in love to its fellow-partners in the same life.

Briefly displayed in this its peculiar and distinguishing strain of Operation.

As also some few Catechistical Questions concerning the way of Salvation by *CHRIST.*

Together with a Post-script about Religion.

By Isaac Penington, *(junior)* Esq;.

John 13. 34, 35.

A new Commandement I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

By this shall all men know that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to another.

LONDON,

Printed by *John Macock*, for *Giles Calvert*, and are to be sold at his shop at the black spread Eagle at the West end of *Pauls*. 1653.

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Printed by [illegible] the Sign of the Wiltshire [illegible] 1673.

The Preface.

THe moſt excellent kind of things is hid, and thoſe kinds which appear, in their greateſt worth and excellency are but vails to that life wherein lieth our happineſs. Miſerable were the eſtate of man, could he enter into that eſtate of life which he deſireth and ſeeketh to enjoy; but more miſerable is his condition, in that he is not only fallen ſhort of that glory which is perfectly ſatisfactory in God, but of that glory which belongs to him to adore and ſolace himſelf in, in his eſtate and condition. All Truth is a ſhadow except the laſt, except the utmoſt: yet every Truth is true in its kind. It is ſubſtance in its own place, though it be but a ſhadow in another place, (for it is but a reflection from an intenſer ſubſtance:) and the ſhadow is a true ſhadow, as the ſubſtance is a true ſubſtance. But this is the exceeding great miſery of man, he meets not with Truth either in ſubſtance or ſhadow, but (that which the world is full of) vanity, a lye, a fiction of his own heart and the Devils, in imitation of the Truth of

God: A Doctrine of his own framing out of the Scriptures, Graces of his own forming in his Soul, and a Worſhip and Ordinances of his own creating for his publique or private Devotion. And yet ſuch hath always been the thick darkneſs of man, that he could never ſee the lye (though never ſo palpable) in his right hand. When the light ſhineth, we ſhall all ſee where we are; but in the dark who is it that doth not miſtake! We are all juſtifying our ſelves and condemning one another, but who is it that ſhall be found able to ſtand before the righteous Judgment of God? who is it in whom the true light and life of God is ſown, and in whom doth it truly ſpring up and ſhoot forth?

Surely if ever there was need of provoking one another to love and good works, the ſeaſon is now proper: Religion is grown ſo outward, and hath ſpread forth into ſuch various forms, pleaſing it ſelf ſo much in that dreſs which it moſt affects, that the inward ſubſtantial part, viz. *the life and power of it, is almoſt loſt in the varieties of ſhapes and ſhadow: The excreſcencies of Religion are become ſo exuberant, that the vigor of it is much drawn from the heart. I profeſs I can hardly blame men for growing out of love with Religion, both it and the Profeſſors of it being grown ſo unlike what it and they once were, and ſtill pretend to be. The worth of Religion conſiſteth not in a name or profeſſion, but in ſuch a life, power, righteouſneſs and holineſs as the ſpirit of man, with all the art and ſtrength of man, cannot attain. Where this is and appears in truth, it will gain eſteem in the ſpirits, hearts and conſciences of men; whereas a name and profeſſion of Religion, falling ſhort of the truth and ſubſtance of that common righteouſneſs and good-will*

which

which is found in man, cannot but moſt deſervedly become a reproach. Love, true love, the love of Chriſt (ſown and ſpringing up) is the life of true Religion; which as it is like the love in Chriſt, ſo it will appear and act like it. This love being of a deep intenſe and moſt pure nature, goeth forth with mighty ſtrength and entireneſs towards the fountain of life from which it came, and towards all the branchings forth of this life into ſuch as are changed and renewed by it: nay it extends it ſelf to all men, even the greateſt enemies, bleſſing them that curſe, and wiſhing well to them that uſe the ſubjects of it in the moſt deſpightful manner; nay to all creatures, expreſſing it ſelf in ſweetneſs, meekneſs, tenderneſs, pity, mercifulneſs, and in what way elſe ſoever it can vent it ſelf in doing good to any ſorts of things, perſons or creatures. This love in its way of acting (according to the pattern) to the houſhold of faith, is in part here deſcribed and expoſed for the view of ſuch as may ſtand in need of ſuch an help, and ſhall find hearts to make uſe of it.

And now Sirs, ye that profeſs Chriſtianity, look to your ſpirits, Watch and keep your garments cloſe about you, leſt the Lord diſcover your nakedneſs, and men ſee your ſhame. Little do ye think what the Lord is in doing. This great noiſe which ye have heard is not for nothing. Life is ſunk into the root: The branches are withered, and a purifying fire will not now ſerve the turn. God, as he can embrace where it may ſeem impoſſible, even that which was utterly caſt off and loſt for ever; ſo he can throw away that which ſeemeth ſaved, he can caſt off that which ſeemeth united to him in a link of perpetuity: God can both raiſe up from among the ſtones children unto Abraham, *cauſing them to ſit down with* Abraham, Iſaac *and* Jacob *in*

the Kingdom; and likewiſe keep out the children of the Kingdom, nay thruſt them out of that Kingdom whereof they have already poſſeſſion in part: Ye have had the experiment of this already in the Jews, take heed of it the ſecond time. But ye will ſay, the natural people were but a type or ſhadow, and ſtood upon other terms then the ſpiritual ſeed did, and therefore that might very well befall them which cannot befall theſe. This is very true in it ſelf, though not true as it is underſtood and applyed. They are not the ſpiritual ſeed which account themſelves ſo, but thoſe whom God maketh ſo by the generating vertue of his own Spirit, and yet thoſe that are the ſpiritual ſeed (or rather they in whom the ſpiritual ſeed is) may fall in their outward ſtation, and ſo loſe that life and ſweetneſs which they had in their ſtanding. But I ſhall not at this time diſpute the caſe, All that I ſhall now ſay to you is, Look to your feet, Look to your ſtanding, Look well to the Rock whereupon ye bottom your Souls, and look that ye be well bottomed on that Rock, leſt either your bottom fail under you, or the boiſterouſneſs of a wind ye have not yet been acquainted with, ſhake you from it. He who is not well rooted in the Truth, may eaſily be ſhaken from the Truth: and he whoſe root is not good will certainly be cut down root and all, when the Ax is layd to him. If the Lord have a time to pluck up what he himſelf hath planted, to break down what he himſelf hath built, alas what will become of the plantations and fabricks of man in his own ſpirit, when the Lord ſhall come to deal with him! O Sirs, Look to your ſelves, Look to your Life, Look to your Salvation, Look to your Happineſs, Look to your Crown. Think of that advice which was given to the Gentiles upon this very conſideration, wherewith I ſhall

conclude

conclude this Preface: BE NOT HIGH-MINDED, *(Be not over-conceited of the excellency of your own light, Do not push with your horns at others, Be not always so busie in engaging the powers of this world against your poor afflicted brethren, nay do not so much as judg them in your own spirits; ye are not to sit in the seat of Judment to judg others, but to come to the throne of Judgment your selves to have sentence passed upon your light, upon your life, upon your heart, and all the motions of it, which are not yet justified, how justifiable soever in your own eyes,)* BUT FEAR, *fear what the Lord can do, fear what the Lord may do, fear what the Lord will do. Be not exalted above others, but fear concerning your selves. Be not proud because of your present station, but fear your fall. Lift not up your selves above others in your own spirits, but throw down your selves at his feet who is a laying all flat, because he finds so much fault with every height, that he will have nothing exalted any more; and this ye will find your best security in the cloudy and dark day, which how far soever ye may put from you, or how far soever it may seem from you, maketh haste.*

THE

THE Life of a Chriſtian.

JOHN 15. 12.

This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

CHriſt being now to leave his Diſciples, (his time drawing very near) begins to break the matter to them, to let them underſtand the *neceſsity* of his *departure* from them, and to prepare them for thoſe *directions* he was about to give them, how to behave themſelves in *this world* during his *abſence*.

In the 33 Verſe of the 13 Chap. He tells them he muſt be with them but a little while, and what he ſaid to the *Jews* they ſhould find true alſo, namely, that he was going whither they could not follow him.

Little children, yet a little while I am with you: Ye ſhall ſeek me, and as I ſaid unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; ſo now I ſay unto you.

The whole 14 Chapter is taken up with this argument, wherein he explaineth unto them many things about it. The *end* of his going, Verſ. 2. *I go to prepare a place for you.* The *certainty of his return* to them, Verſ. 3. *And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto my ſelf, that where I am, there ye may be alſo.* Their own *knowledg* both concerning the place whither he was going and the way thither, which if they could retire inwardly enough into their own ſpirits, they would be ſenſible of, Verſ. 4. *And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.* His *care* of them in the time of his abſence, that they ſhould want nothing, but have what ever they can deſire, he would ſpeed all their prayers, nay he would fulfil them himſelf, Verſ. 13, 14. *Whatſoever ye ſhall ask in my Name, that will I do.* Neither would he leave them deſtitute here on Earth, but ſend his entireſt boſom Friend to dwell continually in their boſoms, Verſ. 16. *And I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever:* Who ſhould do great things for them, Verſ. 26. *He ſhall teach you all things, and bring things to your remembrance, whatſoever I have ſaid unto you.* Laſtly he would give them a very rich bleſſing at his parting, given after ſuch a manner of way as the world cannot give, Verſ. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you: let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* Hereupon he tells them how they ought to part with him, with what temper of ſpirit, which love to him upon a right underſtanding would work in them, namely with joy and not

with

with grief. For we willingly, readily and joyfully part with that, which we entirely love, for its advancement, eſpecially if it be very great, and alſo very beneficial to us. This he urgeth, Verſ. 28. *Ye have heard how I ſaid unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoyce, becauſe I ſaid, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater then I.*

Now there are two things Chriſt moſt eſpecially bends himſelf to urge upon them, to leave imprinted on their ſpirits at his departure. The one relates to *Faith*, the other to *Obedience*: That they would look to their Faith, and to their Obedience: that they would beleeve on him, and keep his Commandments. He had bid them look to their Faith in the firſt Verſe of this 14 Chap. *Beleeve in God, and beleeve in me.* And he had bid them look to their Obedience, in a very affectionate ſtrain of expreſſion, Verſ. 15. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* If ye love me, do it. If ye love me, ye will do it. His commands are ever forcible with us, whom we entirely love. He followeth this conſideration, being a very cloſe one, Verſ. 21, 23, 24. profeſſing that he that loveth cannot but do this, that he that doth this doth love, that he that doth not love cannot do this, and he that doth not this doth not love.

In this 15 Chapter he proceeds to urge both again. He begins with Faith, Verſ. 4. *Abide in me, and I in you.* I have told you theſe things that ye might beleeve, (Chap. 14. 29.) and I am your *Vine* whereinto ye are ingrafted, from and in whom ye have your life; *abide in me.* When I depart from you with my bodily preſence, do not let your faith depart from me, but as ye came to me by faith, ſo ſtay with me by faith: *abide in*

me, and I in you: ſtay in me by faith, and keep me in you by faith. He preſſeth this upon them from divers conſiderations, as firſt there is no bringing forth of fruit elſe, Verſ. 4. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of it ſelf, except it abide in the Vine: no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* Secondly, without this ye will be in danger of your Souls, nay of a truth ye will miſcarry, Verſ. 6. *If a man abide not in me, he is caſt forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and caſt them into the fire, and they are burned.* As faith declines, life waſtes, and the Soul runs further and further into the danger of the fire, which by faith alone is avoyded. Thirdly, Hereby ye may have what ye will. *If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,* if your faith remain, and your obedience alſo, *ye ſhall ask what ye will, and it ſhall be done unto you.* And therefore he bids them alſo look to their Obedience, for that was the way both to glorifie God, Verſ. 8. and to abide in the love of Chriſt, Verſ. 9, 10. *As the Father hath loved me, ſo have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my Commandments, ye ſhall abide in my love: even as I have kept my Fathers Commandments, and abide in his love.* Not as if *Chriſt* did love them ſimply for their obedience, no more then God did love him for his obedience ſimply: but as this was the way wherein the power of the Father led him to remain in the love of the Father, ſo this is the way Chriſts power guides them in to abide in his love: for God and Chriſt muſt be juſt in diſpenſing their love even to their own, according to the Rule of that diſpenſation which they ſet up, and under which they put their own.

Now Chriſt tells them plainly *verſ.* 11. the ground why he did thus vehemently urge theſe things upon them,

them, which was double. 1. That his joy might remain in them, that that joy which he had in them from their obedience in and unto the faith might remain, that he might ſtill find the ſame cauſe of joy in them. 2. That their joy which they had in him might be filled, that they might have not only joy, but fulneſs of joy in Chriſt, which ariſeth from the other, for our joy in Chriſt is filled from Chriſts joy in us: When he delights in us, in our ſtate, temper, and motions, in the diſpenſation wherein he ſets us, then he ſpreadeth himſelf abroad ſo ſweetly and pleaſantly in us, as cauſeth us abundantly to delight in him: both theſe are mentioned in the 11 *verſ. Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* As if he had ſaid: 'Tis true, though ye ſhould be negligent of theſe things, and run into great dangers thereby, yet I might bring you to Heaven at laſt; nay I would not loſe you: but I ſhould have no great delight in you here, nor would ye take any great delight in me, neither would God get any great honour by you, (according to *verſe* 8.) But now, I would not only bring you to Heaven at laſt, but take great delight in you here, and fill your hearts with joy too, and therefore would I have you abide in me, and keep my Commandments, which is the only way thereunto; Theſe are the very ends that I ſo preſs theſe things thus earneſtly upon you for. Now if ye would know what Commandments I mean, this is it I chiefly intend, namely of love one to another. *This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

In the words we may take notice of three particulars.

1. The *Command* it ſelf, *That ye love one another.*

2. The *rule* of this command, the rule whereby the love that anſwers this command muſt be ſquared, and that is Chriſts love, it muſt be ſquared by the love which Chriſt had in him, and which he manifeſted unto, and exerciſed towards his. *As I have loved you.*

3. Chriſts peculiar *owning* of both, both of the command and the rule, or of the command according to the rule. *This is my commandment. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

To glance a little at the ſence of the words.

That ye love one another.

That ye] Ye my diſciples whom I have cheriſhed all my days, and am now about to dye for: for whom I came from Heaven, and for whom I go again to Heaven. *Ye* who were mine before the world was, *Ye* who are mine, and have been mine throughout my whole miniſtry, *Ye* who ſhall be mine for ever and ever.

That ye love] Love in heart, love in word, love in action. Bear a tender affection to them in the bottom of your ſouls: Speak well of them, and good for them, both to God and men: and do any ſervice of love for them. Let them have all the intereſt in you, and power with you that love can command. Think it not much to ſuffer with them, nay to ſuffer even death it ſelf for them. Love is the continual drinking in, and the continual letting out of deſire, delight and ſervice. Our deſire is ſtill after, our delight is ſtill in, our ſervice is ſtill about what we love. And love

though

though it be ſtill buſie about what it loves, yet it can never drink in enough, nor let out enough towards it. Two things make it unſatisfiable, Want of fulneſs to vent upon its love, and want of ability and skill to vent what it hath upon its love.

One another,] This is the extent, the bounds of this love, it muſt reach to all that belong to Chriſt: and it is no difficult matter, no hard task, for it is only to them that have the ſame image, the ſame nature, the ſame life, the ſame beginning, the ſame end. If thou loveſt thy ſelf aright, if thou loveſt Chriſt aright, then thou wilt alſo love theſe who are truly part of thy ſelf, and part of Chriſt. I know the world will hate you, and I do not bid you love it, for there is none of this kind of lovelineſs in it, nothing in them to receive this love, nothing in them for you to faſten this love upon, but I bid you love one another. The world is not to draw forth your love, not to partake of this love, be it never ſo excellent: nor muſt any of theſe miſs of it, be they never ſo weak, never ſo vile.

As I have loved you.] Juſt as I have cauſed my heart to go forth toward you, as I have ever been tender of you, and paſſed by all manner of weakneſſes in you, as I have ever thought well of you my ſelf, and ſpoke well of you to the Father, not taking notice of any of your ſins or frailties further then for your good, as I have performed all manner of ſervices to you, I have deſcended that ye might aſcend, I have fallen that ye might ariſe, I have not ſtuck at giving my very life for you, and all my ſtrength and glory to you, ſo true, ſo great, ſo ſtrong hath my love unto you been: even ſo after this manner do ye

kindle

kindle affections and ſo act them one towards another.

This is my commandment,] This is that commandment which is properly mine. This is that commandment which of all other I will own. This is that eſpecial commandment, which God in this his miniſtration by me towards you, giveth you. This is that commandment, which my ſoul, which my heart, which my nature is moſt in. This is that which I moſt deſire to find in you, which I from my ſelf, from my own heart and ſoul enjoyn you. *This is my commandment. Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart and with all thy ſoul, and thy neighbor as thy ſelf:* theſe were *Moſes* commandments, but *that ye love one another*, this is my commandment. That man ſhould love the Lord who made him, and his neighbor whom he made like him: that the Jews ſhould love God who made them in that their diſpenſation a veſſel of Glory beyond all Nations, and that they ſhould love their fellow-brethren in that diſpenſation, yea and in nature too; This was *Moſes* commandment. But that he who hath the ſeed of the new-life in him, ſhould love him who is a partner with him in the ſame life, This is Chriſts commandment. The love to this brotherhood is from the nature and by the command of Chriſt.

The words do naturally and plainly ſignifie and hold forth thus much unto us.

Obſerv. *That for the Saints or Diſciples of Chriſt to love one another, upon ſuch grounds and in ſuch a way as he loved them, is a thing his heart is very much upon.*

It is the main thing he hath commended to them, it

it is the great injunction he hath layn upon them. As it was the especial Command which God gave Christ, to love his Saints, and that which his heart was most upon of all the Commands which ever he gave him; which if he had neglected, the keeping of all the rest would have been of no value: So it is the especial Command which Christ hath given to his people, and which he most eyeth them in, that they love one another. *This is my Commandment.* Among all the Commandments I have dispensed to you, I shall observe you most in this. Ye must keep them all to remain in my love, vers. 10. but this is the most principal of them all; this is that which I understandingly and most affectionately give you in especial charge as mine: *This is my Commandment.*

To evidence how much the heart of Christ is in this Commandment, we need go no further then this place for the illustration and demonstration of. Consider but his giving out the Commandment; observe but the circumstances of it, and it will very clearly appear.

There are three things very observable about it. *The time* of his giving it out, *The manner* of his giving it out, and *his vehement pressing of it*, both then at his first enjoyning of it, and again and again in this his farewel Sermon.

First, For *the time*, There are two things eminent in that.

One is, in that it was when his love had been well grown towards them, after it had had long duration and frequent exercise, this was particularly taken notice of by this Evangelist just before his relation of it, Chap. 13. 1. Having loved them constantly, having

loved them from firſt to laſt, having loved them as his own with a love ſuitable in ſtrength to the relation, having thus loved them unto the very end, what doth he for them? how doth he ſhew it? Why he addreſſeth himſelf to the impoſing of this Command in the moſt engaging manner that could be, as may be read in the following Verſes.

The other is, that it was juſt afore his paſſion, when he was about to do the greateſt act of love for them that could be done, (for greater love could no man ſhew, as he tells them, Chap. 15. 13.) and anſwerably had been ſtrengthening his affections towards them, that he might do it the more willingly; even then, when his heart was moſt operative in love towards them, then he gives out this Command, as it is obſerved by this Evangeliſt *John*, Chap. 13. 1. *Now before the feaſt of the Paſſover, when Jeſus knew that his hour was come, that he ſhould depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And Supper being ended, &c.* Having his eye upon his Paſſion, and his heart upon his Diſciples, for whom he was to dye, and whom he was now to leave, the ſtrength of his Soul works it ſelf out in love towards them, and the ſtrength of his love thus vents it ſelf, in contriving how he might moſt effectually imprint this Command upon them. Having ſo great things to ſuffer, and his eye being upon it, for he *knew that his hour was come,* one would have expected that his thoughts ſhould have been taken up about them; and ſo they are, but yet not ſo as to divert him from his contrivance and diſpatch of this, which that he ſhould now be ſo buſie and induſtrious about, it ſhews plainly how much his heart was in it.

2. For

2. For the manner of his giving out this Commandment, It is very obſervable, for it was both by *example*, by *precept*, and accompanied with *reaſon* backing both.

1. It was commended to them by his own *example*, he taught it them by his own *practiſe*, which is the moſt effectual way of teaching. He would not barely by word of mouth iſſue out this Command, but he ſets his own *pattern* firſt before them; He would do it himſelf before he would impoſe it on them. And his example is very full. For, 1. That ſervice of love which now he did ſet his example before them in, *viz. waſhing the Saints feet*, was one of the loweſt acts of ſervice. We are all apt to perform honorable acts of ſervice, nay perhaps ſome low acts of ſervice to them that are far above us in gifts and graces, or to perſons in a ſick and weak condition: but to perſons that are in health, and to perſons that are beneath us in degree, love will carry very few to perform ſuch an office of love as Chriſt did here: yet theſe Diſciples of Chriſt were far below him in the graces and gifts of the Spirit of God, beſides that preſent relation wherein he ſtood as *a Lord and Maſter* unto them. 2. He did it in the loweſt manner, with the towel girded about him, *verſ.* 4. as a *ſervant*, they ſitting, and he ſtanding, *verſ.* 12. and in a ready manner, for he roſe from the table to do it, and took the towel, and girded himſelf. 3. He did it to *Judas*, who was no Saint, which takes off that great objection which is ſo ready to riſe in mens ſpirits, *viz. If I knew he were a Saint I could do it, but I fear he is an hypocrite.* Why Chriſt did it to an hypocrite, to one whom he knew to be an hypocrite. That *Judas* was there, may appear by this, it was not the Paſſover

night, but the night before, Chap. 13. 1. and Christ after this gives him the sop, vers. 26. Lastly, he did it, not in the meanness and lowness of his spirit, being now cast down with the sight of that misery which was hastening upon him; but with the view and consideration of his own greatness, as appears vers. 3. *Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, He riseth from supper, &c.* He had not forgot how great he was before this Ministration, how great he was in this Ministration, and how great he should be immediately again, but his eye was fixed upon his glory and greatness in and from and with God, when he did this to them.

2. There was not only example, but precept added to example (and that again and again) and that in a very sweet way, telling them that they ought to do it, and that his doing of it, was but to teach them their duty. It was not necessary for him to do it, only he chose this way of imprinting his instruction the better upon them.

3. He adds a forcible reason, that he being their Lord and Master, and having made known to them his pleasure, and that both by his own command and pattern, they cannot be excused if now they neglect it. Vers. 13, 14, 15, 16. *Ye call me Master and Lord, &c.*

3. For his vehement pressing of it. He doth not only lay it before them, but he presseth it home upon them. 1. He shews them that it is their duty, Vers. 14. *Ye ought also to wash one anothers feet.* 2. He tells them, that the meaning of this piece of service in this abased manner, was to commend it to them so closely, that they might not avoyd it, or think much of it: Vers. 15.

For

For I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do, as I have done to you. 3. By enforcing the reaſon of his example, Verſ. 16. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, The ſervant is not greater then his Lord; neither he that is ſent, greater then he that ſent him.* The greateſt among the Saints, are ſuch as are ſent by Chriſt, and yet they are not greater then Chriſt who ſent them, and therefore need not think much of that (as of an inferior piece of work) which Chriſt did. 4. By pronouncing bleſſedneſs upon them according as they did obſerve it, Verſ. 17. *If ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Happy are ye if ye learn from this pattern, if ye take out this copy, if ye practiſe the duties of this Law of Love according to it. *The happineſs of the Diſciples of Chriſt, conſiſteth much in knowing and practiſing the duties of love* (even in the meaneſt offices of it) *one towards another.* Thus he drives home this duty here.

He urgeth it again in this ſame Chap. v. 34. where he calleth it a new Commandment, to ſet their ſpirits more eager upon it, *A new Commandment I give unto you.* And what is this new Commandment? *That ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye alſo love one another.* He had been telling them of his departure from them, and that very affectionately in the foregoing Verſe, *Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye ſhall ſeek me, &c.* My little children, I muſt leave you, Poor ſweet babes, poor little brats, I muſt be gone, I cannot ſtay with you: But when I am gone remember this Commandment (ye little think what ſweetneſs ye will find in it) *that ye love one another,* with the ſame love and after the ſame manner *as I have loved you*; performing the ſame ſervices of love with the ſame willingneſs and delight. And then in the

following Verſe he knocks in another nail to drive it yet more home: *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have love one to another.* He makes it the badg of Diſcipleſhip, that whereby men ſhould be diſtinguiſhed to appertain to him, to be retainers to him: *By this ſhall all men know, &c.* It is a great priviledg and dignity to be known to be a Diſciple to Chriſt, to be taken notice of by men as a retainer to Chriſt, as one who doth not meerly pretend, but hath indeed learned of him. And *love to the Brethren* (ſuch love as Chriſt expreſſed) is an unqueſtionable character, a diſtinguiſhing badg, ſuch as the world cannot but acknowledg to be a peculiar property of a Diſciple, which you have had from Chriſt, and which none elſe can attain.

In the 14 Chapter he perſwadeth them very affectionately to keep his Commandments, Verſ. 15, 21, 24. and ſo again, Chap. 15. 10. *If ye keep my Commandments ye ſhall abide in my love, &c.* declaring unto them in the next Verſe, that his intent in this vehement Injunction, Exhortation and Perſwaſion of his, was entirely for their good: Verſ. 11. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* And then immediately in the very next words, verſ. 12. ſheweth what Commandment he did chiefly mean all this while, *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you.* Theſe things I ſpeak, I thus vehemently preſs obedience upon you for your own good, that I might have joy of you (which will be very profitable for you) and your hearts might be full of joy: But this is the Commandment which I principally intend, and which I moſt eſpecially expect obedience unto; This is the Commandment which is peculiarly and properly mine, which my joy will be greateſt

greateſt in ſeeing obſerved, and the obſervation of which will conduce moſt towards the filling of your hearts with joy, *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, &c.* How he proceeds yet further to fix it upon their ſpirits by very cloſe conſiderations in the following part of the Chapter, as verſ. 14. and 17. I ſhall not need to make mention of, it being already ſo fully and clearly evidenced. Out of the abundance of the heart, out of the vehemency of his deſire in this particular, hath his mouth uttered all theſe things.

For the further opening of it, theſe two particulars following are to be enquired into.

1. *How Chriſt loved his Saints?* with what kind of love? what his love was, and how it went forth towards them? and ſo we ſhall ſee the rule whereby our love is to be ſquared one towards another.

2. *Why the heart of Chriſt is ſo much ſet upon this,* to have his Diſciples thus love one another? why of all other he maketh this his eſpecial Commandment?

Touching the former, *What the love of Chriſt to Saints was?* or *how Chriſt loved his Saints?*

Love, we know, *is that glue which unites things together* (or, at leaſt, makes them deſire, ſtudy and endeavor union) cauſing them both to wiſh well and do well one for another, according to the nature and degree of it. As *hatred* is that which diſſevers things, and makes them wiſh ill and do ill one to another, according to the nature and ſtrength of it: So *love*, which is contrary to it, doth the clean contrary. What maketh God to hold a kind of union with all his creatures, and to wiſh well to them, and do good for them, according to their ſeveral ranks, but his love to them in its ſeveral degrees? It is from Gods love that he provideth food for

for the creatures, but from a further degree of love that he provideth Redemption for Man, and from a further degree of love yet that he foundeth and faſteneth the Union (and univerſal Communion) between him and his Elect in Chriſt.

Now to ſearch out this Love, we muſt ſeek both into the *Nature* of it, what kind of affection it is; and into the *grounds* of it, whereupon it is faſtened; as alſo into the *degree* and *ſtrength* of it, and into its ſeveral *actings*, and the *manner* of its actings.

I. For *the nature of it*. We know (after our manner of knowledg) that there is a twofold Love: A *natural* love and a *ſupernatural*, an *earthly* and an *heavenly*.

The *natural love* is that affection which God hath put between creatures from ſome ſuitableneſs among them. There is an earthly affection which God hath placed in this Earth towards the things of this Earth, which as they come all out of the ſame Earth, ſo they are a kin and bear a natural affection to one another, though in this hidden ſtate (even in the things of this world) both the relation and affection is much unknown. There is an univerſal love among all creatures (even there where there appeareth an antipathy) from ſome general likeneſs, ſuitableneſs and connaturalneſs among them: but this love is more eſpecially to be diſcerned and taken notice of among creatures of the ſame kind.

This love is heightened in man, above all other creatures, according to the elevation of his nature. It is a ſtamp upon his Soul ſuitable to the nature of his Soul. It is a kind of more ſpiritual glue in him (as his nature is more ſpiritual, whereas it is but a corporeal glue in other creatures) a tincture whereof ſtill remains, though

though much defaced in him by his fall, as all his other excellencies of Nature are.

The *ſupernatural love* is that which grows in Gods own heart, and which he writes with his own finger on the hearts of whom he pleaſeth, and in what degree he pleaſeth. It is that love of a ſpiritual nature, which floweth from God the root, into Chriſt the ſpiritual man, and ſo through him into all the ſpiritual branches, which are ingrafted into and grow in God and in Chriſt. So that this love muſt needs be of a more excellent, high, pure nature then that which is naturally ſown, or can naturally grow in the heart of man.

There are all kind of natural excellencies (which are the ſhadows of the ſpiritual) in man naturally: They are ſown in the nature of the firſt *Adam*, as the ſpiritual excellencies are in the nature of the ſecond *Adam*. There is a natural faith in man, whereby man is able to beleeve, upon good arguments layd before him; but yet this is not *THE FAITH*, this is not *THE HEAVENLY GIFT*. So there is a natural love in the Soul of man, whereby he cannot but love God, and every thing that is lovely and excellent, (though he cannot but alſo hate them in thoſe various diſpenſations and diſcoveries of them wherein God ſtill croſſeth his fleſhly wiſdom and deſire,) but this is not this love. This love is of a more inward, of a more full, of a more ſubſtantial nature then that which groweth in the Soul of man. Now ſuch was the love of Chriſt, of this kind of nature; Not that affection which did naturally belong to his Soul, but that ſpiritual affection which came into his heart with that ſpecial grace which God gave him, with that ſpecial nature which God breathed into him. As his nature was different from the nature

of *Adam*, ſo was the faith of it, and ſo was the love of it. Every thing in him was of the ſame ſtamp with his nature. His love was the very ſpiritual image and ſubſtance of that love which remains in the heart of God.

This is the nature of it in general, whereby it is diſtinguiſhed from all things which are not ſpiritual, and more eſpecially from that love which is naturally planted in the Soul of man. But now we are to enquire into the nature of it yet further, whereby we may diſtinguiſh it from all other ſpiritual things. And that may be done by the common properties of love which are peculiar to it in and according to its kind, as by its *deſire of union*, by its *wiſhing well to the object beloved*, by its *readineſs to do for it*, *&c.*

There is nothing deſires union but love. *Faith* indeed unites, but it doth not ſo deſire union as *love*, it doth not deſire that kind of union which *love* doth. Faith lays hold for help, the deſire of faith is help; but the deſire of love is union. So take *hope*, *patience*, *humility*, *meekneſs*, &c. they have their ſeveral other properties and operations agreeable to their nature, but not this of uniting, they leave this to love. And nothing wiſheth well to the object but *love*: Faith wiſheth good from the object, Hope expecteth good from the object, but 'tis Love only that wiſheth good unto it. And it is love only that acts for it, that acts for the good of it: Faith will make a man work for his own good, but it is love which makes him work for the good of another. It is faith whereby we faſten on God for our own happineſs, but it is love that makes us eye his glory, and work for him: Or if faith alſo do this, it is from that influence that love hath upon it, ſo that ſtill it is love, love in faith, love with faith, love by faith.

This

This then is the love of Christ, namely that spiritual affection planted in his new nature (besides that affection planted in him as a man) whereby he desireth union with, and wisheth well to his, and whereby he is ready to do any thing for them.

II. As touching *the grounds* whereupon Christ loveth them, the grounds whereupon this love, which is planted in Christ, is drawn forth towards them, They are these.

1. The first is *the Fathers love.* God the Father loveth them, and therefore Christ the Son loveth them also. As God has writ the same love in the heart of Christ, as is in his own, so it goeth forth the same way. There are two ways wherein the heart of God goeth forth exceedingly, and the heart of Christ followeth him in both, which are himself and his people; his own glory, and his peoples welfare: God loveth them both entirely, and Christ treads in his very steps in each.

First, for Gods glory, It was the main thing Christ aimed at in all he did, his greatest work was to honour his Father, *I honour my Father, and ye dishonour me:* and *Joh.* 17.4. *I have glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do:* His glorifying of God he looks upon and casts up as the sum of all he did or was to do. And if any did wrong his Father, he felt it; *the reproaches of them which reproached thee, fell upon me.* What made him so zealous about the *Temple*, but because it was his *Fathers house*; which though expiring and growing out of date, was as yet his Fathers, and therefore more worthy then to be so prophaned: *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* Yea the very end for which he desired his own glory was, that he

might be the more able to glorifie his Father. *Father, glorifie thy Son, that thy Son alſo may glorifie thee.* And for the people of God, Chriſts heart goeth forth in wonderful love towards them. He loved them all his life long even to the very laſt: *Joh.*13.1. *Having loved his own, which were in the world, he loved them unto the laſt.* His heart was ever working towards them, He never thought any thing too good for them, yea he layd down his very life freely for them, and while he was doing it, his thoughts ran more upon them then upon himſelf.

God had expreſſed perfect love to them, in that he had choſen them as his peculiar treaſure, which he would enrich ſuitably to himſelf, and enjoy in himſelf, and make happy with himſelf for ever. He choſe Chriſt but to bring this about, who in that reſpect is beneath them, though as he is the chiefeſt part of this treaſure, and the head of it to them, he is far above them. Now Chriſt having juſt ſuch an heart as his Father had, could not chuſe but entirely love that which his Father ſo loved before him. Having the ſame love with his Father, he could not chuſe but act towards the ſame object as his Father did. The love in Chriſt is the ſame ſtill in him as it was firſt in God, and therefore cannot but behave it ſelf as the ſame.

Chriſt doth *what he ſeeth the Father do:* Now ſeeing the Father do this ſo eminently, he cannot but do it as eminently alſo. His love is a copy of the Fathers love, and his actings forth of it are a draught of the Fathers actings. This ground Chriſt himſelf intimates, *Joh.* 17.20. *That the love wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* Chriſt deſires perfect union with them, to be perfectly in them, that is the prime

and

and compleat operation of love: yea but what is the rule whereby, what is the attractive which he deſires might draw him into them? why that he himſelf tells you is the Fathers love. Let thy love, the ſame love, wherewith thou haſt taken poſſeſſion of me, take poſſeſſion of them alſo, and then I will immediately come after and dwell in them too. It is from thy love that I love them, and therefore I muſt firſt ſee thy love go before, and then I will ſoon follow. And for this cauſe take I ſuch pains with them, that I might make them a fit habitation for thy love, and then that I my ſelf might dwell and enjoy them in the ſame love, and the ſame love in them.

2. Another ground of Chriſts love to them is, *his Fathers will.* His Father gave them him to love, and commanded him to love them, yea and gave him that love wherewith he ſhould love them. As the Father giveth Chriſt to us to love; ſo he gave us to Chriſt to love: And as there are a great many duties we owe Chriſt, but love is the main; So of all the duties Chriſt did owe us (as to leave all his glory, and come into this world and ſeek us out, and to dye for us, to ariſe for us, to aſcend for us, to take poſſeſſion of our life and inheritance for us in Heaven, and to take care of us here on Earth) love was the main, and that which fitted him for all the reſt, even as it fitteth us for all our duties, both towards God, towards Chriſt, and towards one another. Yea as this was the eſpecial command which Chriſt gave us, to *love one another*; ſo it was the eſpecial command God gave Chriſt, to *love* us.

In this 15 Chapter of this Goſpel of *John*, Chriſt telleth his Diſciples, *That if they keep his Commandments, they ſhall abide in his love: even as he kept his*

Fathers Commandments, and abode in his love. And of all his Commandments he picks out one preſently in the 12 Verſe following, as if he would commend it unto us as that which will have the moſt especial influence of all, to keep us in his love, which is this of loving one another. Now how cometh Chriſt to pick out this of all the reſt, but that his Father had ſet him ſuch an example, he had picked it out for him, it was the main thing he had given him in charge, and the main thing he expected from him, as he intimates in the 10 Chapt. of this Goſpel, verſ. 17. *Therefore doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* He had been ſpeaking verſ. 15. of laying down his life for the ſheep, from his knowledg of the Father, from his knowledg of the heart and will of the Father. *As the Father knoweth me, even ſo know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the ſheep.* The Father knoweth me whom he hath entruſted, and I know him who hath entruſted me, and want neither love to him nor them, but lay down my life for them. And other ſheep he had to take care of, beſides thoſe of this fold, which he would take care of alſo, verſ. 16. Now ſays he, *therefore my Father loves me, becauſe I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* This is that act of love in me, this is that act of obedience from me to the will and command of the Father, which draweth and engageth the heart of the Father ſo exceedingly to me. *Therefore my Father loveth me, becauſe I lay down my life,* ſo readily, in ſuch a way of love, in ſuch ſtrength of love to my ſheep, *that I might take it again* to perfect their Salvation. So that God gave Chriſt this especial command, as well as Chriſt giveth it us; and his heart was ſo much in it, that his love went out towards Chriſt, as

Chriſts

Chriſts heart went out in love towards his ſheep: This was the motive, the attractive of the Fathers love to him; διὰτοῦτο, *therefore* or *for this my Father loveth me, becauſe I lay down my life, &c.*

And could God do leſs then give Chriſt a command to love them, when he gave them him to this very end, and therefore gave them unto him in all ſuch relations as might draw love, as, *as his brethren (wherefore he is not aſhamed to call them brethren). as his own children (behold I and the children which thou haſt given me) as his own* moſt proper *Spouſe*, as the very *natural members* of his own *body*? What could his meaning be in all this, but that he ſhould exceedingly love and cheriſh them? And ſurely his Father would never have given them him, unleſs he had had very good aſſurance that he would love them well: And therefore, to put that out of doubt, he gave him love firſt before he gave him them, and when the *Law* was in his bowels, then he calls him forth to take care of them, *Pſal.* 40. 7, 8. God firſt writ the Law of Love in his heart, and then he gave him theſe to love. And this is a ſecond ground which doth much prevail with the heart of Chriſt, and would ſway exceedingly with him, had he no affection of his own unto them: It is his Fathers will and pleaſure, it is the great command of the Father to him, that he ſhould love them, very truly, fully and heartily, even as the Father loved him. But thirdly.

3. Chriſt loveth them becauſe of *their relation to the Father and himſelf.* They belong to the Father, and they belong to him; they are Gods proper goods, and his proper goods: *Thine they were, and thou gaveſt them me.* They are *the children of the moſt High, the ſons and daughters of his own Father, his brethren and ſiſters by* genera-

Generation; his Spouſe, the Spouſe which his Father prepared for him and brought him, the Spouſe which he himſelf purchaſed with his deareſt blood. There is the ſtrength and ſweetneſs of the choyceſt relations to draw his love, and theſe relations ſet off too with all the commendable accents that can be. Now we know, *Relations carry love with them,* though there be no other ground of love beſides the relation. It is not deformity (or any other unlovelineſs in others eyes) which can eat out the love of relations. A man loveth his brother, his ſiſter, his wife, his child; though black, though crooked, though weak in body and mind. And this is another ground why Chriſt loveth his, it is becauſe they are his and the Fathers, it is becauſe of their relation to the Father and him.

4. There is yet a further ground why Chriſt loveth them, which is becauſe of *their likeneſs to himſelf and the Father*; becauſe his *image* (which is alſo the image of the Father) is implanted in them, and ſhall be perfected upon them.

Likeneſs is the greateſt attractive of love that can be (for it moſt naturally draweth it forth.) Likeneſs in nature, likeneſs in feature, likeneſs in diſpoſition, &c. are ſtrong drawers. Now there is the greateſt likeneſs in the Saints to Chriſt that can be: There is no ſuch likeneſs to him any where elſe to be found, and therefore no ſuch love can go forth from him any whither elſe. They have the ſame nature, the ſame lineaments, the ſame courſe, the ſame end with him. They have *grace for grace* with Chriſt. They are like to him in every reſpect; There is not one thing admirable in him, but there is the likeneſs of it in them. Is he *wiſe, holy, full of faith, love, all ſpiritual wiſdom and excellency?*

why

why they have not only a ſhare in theſe, but they have alſo a copy of them writ on their own hearts. Did he *deſcend, ſuffer, dye? &c.* They follow him in the ſame ſteps, they take the ſame courſe with him, and are changed and perfected by him through theſe, after the ſame manner as he was changed and perfected by his Father (who made him *perfect through ſufferings*) 2 *Cor.* 3. 18. ſo that every day they grow more like him. It is no marvel therefore if Chriſt love them ſo, how can he chuſe, they being already ſo far in, and growing ſo continually further and further into his likeneſs?

And they are like his Father too: And next likeneſs to our ſelves, the image of our parents doth exceedingly take us in any: and it takes Chriſt as much as his own likeneſs, becauſe he loveth the image of his Father, as well as himſelf.

Theſe are the grounds whereupon the love of Chriſt is drawn forth towards the Saints.

III. For *the degree and ſtrength* of it, it is the greateſt that can be. It is not only the moſt excellent kind of love, but it is advanced and drawn forth likewiſe to the utmoſt kind of degree. He loveth them *with all his heart, and with all his ſoul.* Greater love there cannot be then Chriſts, nor can love go out with greater ſtrength: And therefore Chriſt when he would expreſs how he would have us love our brethren to the utmoſt degree of our love (of that love God hath placed in us) he bids us love one another as he hath loved us.

The ſtrength of Chriſts love to his appears in theſe three things. In his wiſhing well to them, in his deſire of union with them, in his readineſs to do any thing for them. According to the degree and ſtrength of theſe,

is the degree and ſtrength of love. For theſe as they flow from love, ſo they riſe in height, life and vigor according to the degree and ſtrength of love.

1. The ſtrength of Chriſts love appeareth *in his wiſhing well unto them.* We ever wiſh good to the party we love, according to the degree of love we bear them: Now Chriſt wiſheth to his the greateſt good that can be. Look what ever is good for them in this world, what ever is good for them in the other world, he wiſheth unto them in the fulleſt manner and meaſure.

There are three things chiefly good for his *in this world,* in that ſtation wherein they ſtand, and in that courſe which they are to run here, which are theſe. *Preſervation from the evil of the world, Communion with their God,* and *to joy in God through him. (Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. It is good for me to draw nigh to God. Rejoyce evermore.)* And all theſe he wiſheth to his very heartily and fully.

See how vehemently he urgeth that requeſt, that God would *preſerve them from the evil of the world, Joh.* 17. He urgeth it ſo far, that he is fain to make an apology for it, that it was not ſo much in reference to him, as to them and their ſtate; it was not ſo much to draw the thing down from him, as to draw up their hearts to beleeve the certain deſcent of it, Verſ. 13.

Then for *Communion with God,* He did not only begin it, but he hath taken all ways to preſerve & increaſe it. He hath layd the foundation of it between them, he hath entred them into it, and hath appointed Ordinances for the exerciſe and continuation of it, that therein God and they might ſtill be meeting. He receives God on the one hand, and them on the other hand, and knits them both in himſelf, cauſing them to flow into and live

live in each other. He knows God will abide in him, and thither he bringeth them, and biddeth them abide there alſo, *Joh.* 15. that they may ſtill be ſucking the ſweetneſs of God through him, that being the only way: for as they come at firſt to enjoy God by Chriſt, ſo they muſt ever draw the ſweetneſs of God through Chriſt.

And for *joying in God,* he would always have them be doing it, and therefore leads them the ready way to it, *Joh.*14.1. *Let not your heart be troubled; beleeve in God, and beleeve in me.* Yea he would have them have full joy, *Joh.*14.11. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* Thus he tells them, and he tells God the ſame, *Joh.*17.13. *And now I come to thee: and theſe things I ſpeak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themſelves.* I am coming to Heaven to thee, where I ſhall have joy enough, to *ſit at thy right hand,* where is *fulneſs of joy*; but for all that I ſhall never be at reſt, unleſs my Saints on Earth be full of joy alſo, and for that very end I ſpeak theſe things here at my departure, and preſs thee thus earneſtly in their behalf for thoſe things which their hearts moſt deſire, and which are moſt neceſſary for them, that it might conduce ſomewhat that way, namely to the filling of their hearts with joy when I am gone.

So likewiſe for *the other world,* he wiſheth them the beſt thing there, *viz. the full and perfect enjoyment of God.* It was his very *deſign,* and *the very end* for which he underwent all miſeries in this world, to bring them near to God, even into his preſence, that they might be filled with *all the fulneſs of God,* (as every thing, which is there, is,) and he will never leave till it

be done. This is that he hath undertaken to bring them to in eternal life, or this is that eternal life which he is fitting them for, and will not fail to bring them into, *viz.* the enjoying God in perfection, the perfect enjoying of a perfect God, to enjoy God as he himſelf doth, which is as much and as fully as he can be enjoyed: They muſt be *fellow-heirs*, have the ſame *inheritance* with him, the ſame *Kingdom*, the ſame *Crown*, the ſame *Life*, the ſame *Glory*, the ſame *Immortality*, punctually the very ſame inheritance, which inheritance is God, for he is *the ſole portion of Chriſt and of all his people.* And then ſhall Chriſt *ſee of the travel of his Soul and be ſatisfied* in and concerning his *ſeed*, when he hath perfectly redeemed them, and layd them in the boſom of God, to ſuck in and enjoy all that is to be enjoyed there: when he hath fitted their hearts to receive God, even the fulneſs of God, and hath ſeen the fulneſs of God poured out into their hearts, and doth himſelf taſte and enjoy it there. The Lord could never reſt (in the way of his operation) till he had emptied himſelf fully into Chriſt, and Chriſt can never reſt till he hath emptied himſelf with all that fulneſs into them, and till he hath brought them into himſelf, and through himſelf into God, and ſo both ways into all that fulneſs. And that God might take delight in them, and be as much with them, and do as much for them as is poſſible (in this time and day of ſeparation and diſtance) he plants waters, and cauſeth to ſpring up in them the light, the life, the love of God, and whatſoever elſe God delights to be in and with, both to cheriſh with his preſence, and to fill with his appearance, *Joh.* 17.26.

This is the firſt thing wherein the ſtrength of Chriſts love diſcovers it ſelf, *viz. in wiſhing well to them:* His deſires

deſires of their good and welfare are extended to the utmoſt degree, and therefore his love from whence they proceed muſt needs be very large.

2. The ſtrength of Chriſts love appeareth further, *in his deſire of union with them.* Every thing deſireth union with what it loveth, according to the nature and degree of the love it bears: If therefore we would know how ſtrong Chriſts love is, let us ſee what kind of deſire of union there is in him.

Now his deſire of union with them is as large as his well-wiſhes to them. He deſireth the moſt perfect and compleat union with them that poſſibly can be, and as ſoon as may be. He would have the union preſent and growing, large and laſting.

Not to follow theſe heads particularly, conſider how full an union he deſires and the largeneſs of his deſire but in theſe four reſpects.

1. He deſireth to have them *with him*, to have them be where ever he is. If there were a perſon whom we could never endure to have out of our ſight, but he muſt ſtill be where we were, in the room with us, at board with us, in bed with us; if we could never abide to go any whither or do any thing without that perſon, every one (who ſaw this) would conclude there to be a great ſtrength of affection in us towards that perſon. Why thus it is with Chriſt: Do the Father what he will for them, take he never ſo much care of them, &c. it will not ſerve Chriſts turn, it will not ſatisfie Chriſts heart, but they muſt be with him, in his Country, in his houſe, at his board, in his bed, they muſt walk up and down with him in the fulneſs of the Father. And this little momentany abſence of his from them, it is meerly out of judgment, knowing it to be good both for him-

ſelf and them, and for the glory of his Father; but it is as much as his heart can do to bear it. And he profeſſedly tells his Father it muſt not be ſo always, *Joh.*17. 24. *Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me, be with me where I am, &c.* Did ye ever obſerve Chriſt to uſe ſuch a manner of praying before, *Father, I will?* as if he had ſaid, If I would abate ſomewhat of my former petitions, and ſhould be content that thou ſhouldſt not preſerve them from the evil of the world, but let them tumble a little in the mire, ſo that thou didſt them good by it, Though I might like this well enough, yet this of their being with me I cannot, I will not: *Father, I will.* Thou haſt made me a King, and this is my will and pleaſure in reference to them, which I cannot vary from. I muſt have them with me; I do ſo love them, that I cannot live long here without their company: My glory is no glory to me, unleſs they ſee and enjoy it with me. If therefore thou meaneſt to keep me in Heaven, thou muſt bring them up to Heaven, for I cannot, I will not live there without them.

2. It will not ſerve Chriſts turn to have them with him, but he muſt alſo have them *in him:* A ſtrange kind of union. What we love we hug in our boſoms. Now as Chriſts love is more inward and intenſe then any other love, So he muſt have more inward expreſſions too, he muſt hug them in the inſide of his boſom, They muſt be *in him:* He muſt have them within his very heart, to make much of them there. *Joh.*17.21. *That they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they alſo may be one in us.* This deſire, this requeſt Chriſt putteth up for them all, he would have them all both in God and in himſelf. This is the thing he drives at concerning them, and this is the reaſon why he

he begs ſo much the care and protection of God over them, in the foregoing part of the Chapter, that they all may at length come to a perfect union in God and in him. Indeed the ſtation of Beleevers here is in Chriſt, they are graffed into him, planted into him, ſeated in him, in him to abide, and in him to grow, as the branch is in the Vine: But this is not the perfect kind of union, or at leaſt not perfect in its kind, they are not all thus in him, nor are any, that are but thus in him, perfectly in him. There is a ſweeter, a fuller, a compleater being and abiding in him, which he longeth and prayeth for, to fill him, to be his fulnefs, to be all to him and ſuck all from him.

3. Nay thirdly, This will not ſerve his turn neither, but he muſt alſo be *in them*. They muſt be with him and in him, and he with them and in them. They muſt live in his Kingdom, in his Spirit, within his Life; and he muſt be, live, dwell, in their ſpirits, in their country. Now this is ſuch an union as was never heard of, for one to be in that which is in him: But Chriſts love is a ſtrange kind of love, and therefore may well produce a ſtrange kind of union, even ſo ſtrange as he that is not acquainted with this love cannot apprehend poſſible. For that to be the continent which is contained, to be in that which it doth contain in it ſelf, how can this be? Yet the Scripture is expreſs for it, *Joh.* 17. 23. *I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.* And again, Verſ. 26. *That the love wherewith thou haſt loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* He cannot be ſatisfied, only to have them lie in his heart (though that liketh him very well,) but he muſt alſo lie in their heart. He muſt have the ſame place in them, that he giveth them in himſelf. As he prepares a boſom for them, ſo he cannot

not be content unleſs he find a boſom in them. They muſt be *his houſe, his home, his Tabernacle, his dwelling, yea his reſting place*, as he is theirs. *I in them.* No where muſt they be, but in Chriſt; no where will Chriſt be, but in them: He can be no where elſe, He can live no where elſe, He can reſt no where elſe, He can enjoy himſelf no where elſe. What Chriſt is to God, we are to Chriſt; we come from him, and yet he cannot be without us: As we cannot live but in him, ſo he cannot live but in us; He doth not reckon his life as life, until he come to enjoy us. His life doth as it were wither while it is baniſhed from us; it lives alone, it doth not bring forth fruit, nay it doth not enjoy it ſelf: But when it cometh to be ſet up in us, then it will be life indeed, and then it will live indeed.

4. Neither will all this ſerve, but that nothing might draw him from them, and he might have full and only content in them, he muſt have *all of God* (all that ever he can need to look after or deſire) *in them.* As he placeth all that they ſhall need or can deſire of God, he placeth all this in himſelf, that they ſhall not need to ſeek for any thing out of him: So he placeth all that he can deſire in them, that he may have no temptation to move his eye or ſpirit any further in the leaſt. The fulleſt enjoyment of God that ever his heart ſhall meet with, he deſires to have in them. That he may have no cauſe of ſtirring out from them, to ſeek any thing of God, he will have all of God in them. He doth as it were let go God, as he himſelf grew out of him, to cleave to God, as he (that is, God) groweth up in them. This is the great Myſtery, the Myſtery of that *ſpiritual affection* which is between *Chriſt* and the *Church*; They forſake God to enjoy one another; They can delight no where,

where, in nothing of God, but in one another. *Ephes.*5. 31. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* This is a very mysterious thing: That a man should leave that tye and relation which is natural, to make up another which is artificial; That a man should loosen himself from that which is neareſt to him, to unite himself to that which is far off from him; That a man should leave his own father who begat him, and his mother which bare him, and go cast all his love upon a wife which was a meer stranger to him. Yea saith the Apostle, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church, *This is a great Mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the Church,* vers.32. There's a Mystery indeed, That Christ should leave his Father as it were, that no communion of Christ with his very Father will serve him but in his Church, that what ever sweetness God will give him to taste of, he must put it into his Church, and let him taste it there, that he is not satisfied with his Fathers house and presence in any other way of enjoyment but in his Spouse, and will leave it every other way, but as he can have it and enjoy it in her. This is wonderfully mysterious, and is a little shadowed out in that common relation between man and wife, where we find such a kind of passage as this is.

And this may be the reason why Christ desireth that the love of God may be in them, even that very love wherewith God had loved him, *Joh.*17.26. *That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them.* I would fain be in them, and yet I would lose nothing of thee by it, therefore I would have that very love wherewith thou hast loved me, be in them, that I may find it there. As God hath placed all his love in

Christ for us, and there we come to it: So Christ would have God place all his love in us for him, that he need not go any further then us for any thing of God. Christ knoweth that if he hath the love of God, he hath all; and that he would have in us, because he would constantly and perfectly be centred in us: Because he would be fixed there, he would have every thing there that his heart can desire, and that only is the love wherewith God loved him, which he was contented to part with, that he might take it up again.

This is the second thing wherein the strength of Christs love appears, *His desire of union*, which being so vast, what is the spring which nourisheth it?

3. The strength of Christs love appeareth yet further, *in his readiness to do any thing for them*. Love is active, it is ever in doing for that it loves according to the degree of it. Now the greater and more constant this propensity is, the greater and stronger must that root of love needs be from whence it floweth. His readiness to do for them appears in these three respects.

1. What ever *excellency* was in him which might do them good, he would put forth to the utmost: His wisdom, his strength, his love, or what ever else was precious in him, he never spared, when they had need of them. What ever he was able to do in himself, he was sure to do for them, when their need called for it.

2. What ever was *dear* to him, he would part with for them. He would let any thing go (though never so pleasant) which he himself enjoyed, if thereby he might advantage them. The glory he had with his Father before the world was, he layeth down for their sakes: His

dear

dear life he counted not dear to him, when he was to part with it for their good.

3. He would and ſtill will *venture* any thing for them, his choyceſt intereſt in God he hath and will hazard at any time to ſave them: When God is moſt angry, he is not backward to ſtep in and deſire him to ſheathe his ſword, for he muſt not ſtrike them unleſs he ſtrike through him firſt, which he knows he cannot, he will not do. Was it not a venturous thing for *Aaron*, when God was angry and executing vengeance, to run and *ſtand between the living and the dead*, to ſtop God in the courſe of his wrath, to beat it back as it were forcibly? yet *Aaron* was but a type of *Chriſt* herein, who doth the ſame thing more effectually and powerfully every day.

He that will thus lay out all, he that will thus loſe and part with all, He that will not yet ſtick continually to venture what he hath received anew, hath certainly a ſtock of very rich love, and great ſtore of it.

IV. For *the actings* of his love, wherein both the nature and ſtrength of it will yet further appear, they are wonderful great and ſtrange, and that if we conſider them either in the varieties of his conditions, or in the varieties of their conditions, for he is ſtill the ſame in both. How ever his ſtate or heart was changed by the power of his condition, yet it was never changed towards them, when it moſt failed and fainted it remained in ſtrength of love to them; and how ever they were changed either in themſelves or towards him, yet it could produce no other alteration in him towards them, then ſuch as proceeded from his love, and was profitable for them.

1. *Look on him under the variety of his own conditions.*

When he was in Heaven, long before this world was made, he fell in love with them there. The firſt ſight his Father gave him of them raviſhed his heart. His love then acted three ways, or expreſſed it ſelf in three things towards them.

1. In his deſire to have them his wife. So ſoon as ever he ſaw them, *This is*, ſaith he, *bone of my bone, and fleſh of my fleſh*, This was taken out of me, this is part of my ſelf, which muſt be again united to me, or I ſhall feel want. There is no helper to be found for me out of my ſelf, and this is that meet helper in which my heart can alone find reſt. He knew her, ſo ſoon as ever he beheld her, as the beloved of his Soul, and never did any more ardently or naturally ſeek room for his ſpirit in any thing, then he did for himſelf in her.

2. In undertaking all that God required thereto. He was content to ſerve for his wife, (*Jacob*'s ſerving for his was but a type hereof.) He was content to purchaſe, to buy his wife, and that with no ſmall price: And he was content to fight for her, after he had done it, he undertook to deal with all her enemies, *Sin, Devil, Death, Grave, Hell*, and redeem her from them all. He did ſo love her, that he was willing to take the hardeſt ways that could be to come by her, rather then go without her. His love would not ſuffer him to ſtand capitulating upon the terms, but ſo ſhe may be his, he careth not what he undertake or undergo for her.

3. In his delighting in her then. He did not grumble at the price when he began to conſider of it, he did not repent of the large offer he made for her, nor ever ſo much as ſaid ſhe coſt me too dear, but it rejoyceth his heart to think on her, and the ſight of her doth revive him more then the ſight of the trouble, hardſhip and miſery

miſery that lies between him and her, and which he muſt neceſſarily paſs through before he can enjoy her. *Prov.* 8. 30, 31. *Then was I by him*, &c. *rejoycing in the habitable part of his Earth, and my delights were with the ſons of men.* This he did notwithſtanding he was then in Heaven, drowned in glory there, and knew ſhe was to be found by him in this miſerable corrupted world, and in a moſt corrupt and miſerable condition in it, yet the ſight of his Spouſe is of ſuch vertue with him, that notwithſtanding this diſadvantage, it can adminiſter joy and delight to him even in the midſt of the fulneſs of the joys of Heaven.

Again, Look on him *when he came into this world.* Though he was to leave the glory of Heaven, after he had been ſo accuſtomed to the ſweetneſs of it, yet he comes skipping into it, *Lo I come*, ſaith he; haſt thou *prepared me a body?* I will not delay to take it up. And what made him ſo willing thereunto, but the ſtrength of his love to them for whoſe ſake he did it? *Thy Law is in the midſt of my bowels*; what Law, but the Law of Love to his Father and to his Spouſe? And his low and mean condition we never find troubling of him, nor any affliction he met with, his love to them ſo ſweetened every thing he was to do for them. Yea that bitter cup at which he ſo ſtartled when he took it, becauſe of that terrible gall and wormwood wherewith it was filled, yet how did he long to drink it off for their ſakes! *I have a Baptiſm to be baptized with, and how am I ſtraitned till it be accompliſhed!* Methinks my bowels are bound up, I do not ſeem to my ſelf to have expreſſed love enough to my people, until I have done it.

And while he was preſent here, he bent himſelf to

give forth and leave behind him teſtimonies of his love to all poſterity. He choſe a company of Diſciples to be patterns of his actings towards all his Saints, to the worlds end; who themſelves were types of what his Saints would be, and his actings towards them were types of what he would act towards his Saints, which is not again to be done outwardly, but is continually done by him inwardly in and towards his. Now conſider what theſe were, and how he behaved himſelf towards them. They were men full of *weakneſs*, full of *darkneſs*, full of *paſſions*, full of *pride*, often ſtriving who ſhould be greateſt, expecting fleſhly pomp and advantage by him, much failing in love to him, (what, *not watch with me one hour?*) in ſo much as they left him when he had moſt need of them, they hid themſelves from him, they denyed him, they feared a little reproach or danger for his ſake, who feared nothing for theirs: And yet how tender was he of them continually, not upbraiding them for their unkindneſſes, nor neglecting any act of kindneſs towards them. After his Reſurrection he ſtayeth forty days from glory for their ſakes, to ſatisfie them about his Reſurrection, and his love to them, and to give them full inſtructions about the ordering of his Kingdom here on Earth, wherein their ſafety, peace and comfort lay.

And now he is in Heaven, he ſpends his whole time for them. He is taking up ſtill there what belongs to them. He is keeping all ſurmiſes from the heart of God, and daſhing all pleas which the Devil craftily and maliciouſly is ſtill entering in againſt them. He is ſuing out warrants from God to have dayly beſtowed upon them what grace can do for them for the beſt, according to their conditions: And he ſends his beſt

friend,

friend, the Spirit, out of his own boſom to bring him news how it fares with them, and to look to their hearts while they are in this world, and to be dayly working them up to bleſſedneſs. And, methinks, I hear Chriſt ever and anon renewing his charge, as he ſends him; *Go, look to my little ones, ſee they want nothing that thou canſt do for them: See that they want no light in that dark world wherein they are: See they want no life in the midſt of that dead world: See they want no comfort in the midſt of thoſe diſtreſſes, which it pleaſeth my Father to exerciſe them with. Go and bear with their unkind actings towards thee, Conſider where they are, conſider what they are, conſider what they ſuffer, and deal gently with them for my ſake, and what affronts they put upon thee, or what injuries they offer thee, I will make up to thee, as I have already done unto my Father.*

2. *Look on the actings of his love towards them under the variety of their conditions.*

Firſt, *In their unconverted eſtate,* in that moſt loathſom eſtate wherein he findeth them lying, before he bringeth them home to God: His heart doth not then loath them, but is pitying them, and contriving how he may bring them home with moſt advantage; *Other ſheep I have which are not of this fold, them alſo I muſt bring, Joh.* 10. 16. He ſhews where his heart was, when he ſaid little, namely upon his ſheep, his loſt ſheep, his ſcattered ſheep, about bringing them into the fold where they may be ſafe and at reſt.

2dly. *In their converted eſtate, and their ſeveral turns and changes there.* In all their *ſickneſſes,* in all their *relapſes,* in all the *miſeries* which befall them by their own folly, in all their *ſinful actings* againſt God, in all their *unkind actings* towards him, in the midſt (which goeth moſt

moſt to his heart) of their *grieving of his holy Spirit*, when they are ſtubborn and rebellious, and act moſt unthankfully, when they will not truſt him, nor by no means be perſwaded of the love he beareth towards them, but are interpreting that ill which he intended well, ſtriving againſt all the good which he is doing them, and doing that moſt eagerly which his Soul moſt abhorreth in them, yet then, even then is he doing for them the beſt offices of love which poſſibly can be done. As they then moſt need the care, love and tenderneſs of Chriſt, ſo he will be ſure then to lay it out for them. And when at any time he worketh in them, by his own Spirit, what is pleaſing in his eyes, he attributeth it to them, and accepteth it from them, as if it were their own. Indeed they do nothing, not ſo much as think a good thought of themſelves, but he doth all in them, and yet he attributeth all to them. If he put it into their hearts, and enable them to feed or clothe any of his, he ſetteth it upon their account, and upon an high account too, even as their feeding and clothing of him. He thinks no ill of them, he interprets every thing in the beſt kind concerning them, He loves them ſo as nothing in them or from them can mitigate his affection to them, or hinder him from doing the utmoſt he can for their good, He takes occaſion from all their unlovelineſs to ſtir up his heart to acts of love towards them ſuitable to that their ſtate, but never to decline thereby from them, Here is love indeed. It would be too tedious to inſtance in the ſeveral acts in the ſeveral kinds of it, as in *pity*, in *care*, in *bounty*, in *delight*, &c. wherein the high and noble ſtrain of his love doth on every occaſion put forth it ſelf, Let it ſuffice therefore to have given a little touch at it.

V. For

V. For *the manner* of his acting love, Love acteth in him this fourfold way, or he performeth the acts of love after this fourfold manner, *Primarily, Purely, Suitably,* and *Fervently.*

1. *Primarily,* He is first in love, and first in every act of love. What he speaketh of that one act of love, *viz.* of *Election,* Joh. 15. 16. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,* he was first in it, is true of every act else. He doth not stay for acts of love from us, before he performeth acts of love to us, but *we love him because he loved us first,* and we perform acts of love to him, because we first learned them of him. As Christ learned his love of the Father, so we learn our love of Christ. Yea before we can perform any act of love to him, there must several acts of love go forth from him towards us: he must both give us the grace, and quicken it, and draw it forth whensoever we act any thing with affection towards him. They are not our prayers that move him, but his love is before them, (and yet what can move him more?) but it is his love, the spirit of his love from and according to his love, that teacheth, guideth and enableth us to pray.

2. *Purely,* not with by-ams or by-ends concerning himself, but as he loves with pure affection, so he loves in a pure manner. As his love is spiritual love, so it acts spiritually, it hath no by-ends, no by-ways, but all its motions are like it self. Its purity discovereth it self in these three respects.

1. It will do nothing to dishonour God through love to them. Though Christ love them unspeakably, exceedingly desiring their happiness and his enjoyment of them, yet he will not intrench upon God in the least, in effecting of it. *Lo I come, I delight to do thy will, O my*

God. And again, *I do always the things which please him.* And when he ſpeaks of having finiſhed his courſe, *Joh.* 17. *I have glorified thy Name,* ſaith he. Though he was always full of affection of ſtrength to them, and did every thing in great love to them, yet it never carried him aſide from the honour of his Fathers Name.

2. It will neglect nothing that may be for their good, though it never ſo much offend them. If they want *a chiding,* if they want *reproof,* if they want *rods,* yea if they want *ſcorpions,* they ſhall have them: And if they grow froward and cry out, Chriſt doth not love me, for if he did he could not thus deal with me, all this ſhall not ſave them, but he will laſh and ſting them ſo much the more, not out of ill will or paſſion, but becauſe the condition of their froward ſpirits requireth ſo much the more, which cannot (as the ſtate ſtands) be abated without prejudice. Chriſt doth not love them with a doting love, to let them ſee nothing but what they will call acts of love, but he will do that which he knoweth to be an act of love, how ever they interpret it.

3. It will do nothing which may be for their hurt. Though they are apt to nouriſh humors, yet Chriſt will never be drawn, through his love to them, to nouriſh thoſe humors. Hence it is that the Soul though it beg never ſo hard for ſome one mercy, and that a ſpiritual mercy, uſing all its intereſt in Chriſt to obtain it, yet (in ſome caſes) it can by no means come neer it, but the mercy doth as it were run the further from him, by how much the more he ſeeketh it. This proceedeth from the purity of the love of Chriſt, who knoweth what condition they are in, and how ill this mercy would ſuit them in their preſent condition. Perhaps it would

would feed ſome luſts (whereof they are not aware) which ſtand ready to prey upon it, and fatten themſelves with it, ſo ſoon as it ſhould be given in: Perhaps it would lift them up in their own thoughts, and ſo (either that or ſome other way) interrupt their naked dependance upon God, and any ſuch evil conſequence (which they may not fear, but ſuppoſe that the mercy it ſelf might preſerve them from) would do them more harm, then the enjoyment of the mercy could do them good.

3. *Suitably.* Chriſt puts forth ſuch acts of love and ſo, as their need requireth. Sometimes he putteth forth acts of pity, ſometimes acts of help, ſometimes acts of delight: Not all at all times, but what our preſent eſtate and every thing conſidered together doth call for. The not underſtanding of this cauſeth Chriſtians ſo often to queſtion the love of Chriſt towards them: If he be not continually putting forth acts of delight in them, and giving teſtimonies of ſweetneſs to them, they are apt to think that his love at leaſt declines; whereas there are heart-workings of love in Chriſt which they cannot perceive (but only know by faith that they muſt needs be) nor is it fit that they ſhould perceive them, in the condition that they ſometimes are in: But as Chriſt hath revealed his love to be ever conſtant and ſtrong to them, ſo they ſhould ever beleeve it to be ſo; and it is the glory of faith ſo to judg of it, when as nothing of it appears in the view of ſenſe. To what end hath God given them faith, if they notwithſtanding eſteem of things by and according to ſenſe? But what ever condition they are in, though Chriſts love may not diſcover it ſelf to them in the way they expect and deſire, yet it always goeth forth in the moſt ſuitable way. In

all their miſeries he is not only pitying them, but *bearing them company*; He bears their burdens with them, he helps them, he ſupports them, he contrives and proſecutes their reſcue and redemption; and if he may not do it openly, yet he will not fail to do it effectually, though ſecretly and unſeen by them. What ever their diſtreſs be, whether outward or inward, whether by ſin from within, or by affliction from without, even when they have caught a grievous fall by their own folly and head-ſtrongneſs, yet even then is he mourning over them, and conſidering how he may raiſe them up again with moſt advantage. *Rejoyce not againſt me, O mine enemy, though I fall, I ſhall riſe again.* In our loweſt ebb he is certainly thus with us, doing this for us, though we cannot poſſibly imagine; *Nevertheleſs I am ſtill with thee, thou holdeſt me by my right hand,* ſaid the Spirit of Chriſt in *David*, when he had ſeemed to himſelf neglected and removed from the care and love of God beyond the common ſort of the world. *In their weakneſſes* he is ſtill condeſcending to them, he bears with all their infirmities, yea he apologizeth for them in his own heart, *The ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak:* He conſidereth both what frail fleſh they are, and what a ſtrong body of corruption hangeth about them in this their weak eſtate. *When ever they do well,* he is delighting in them: A father will not ſtroke or be pleaſant with his child when he behaveth himſelf untowardly, Chriſt knoweth it is unfit to expreſs delight in them then, Therefore Chriſt telleth his Diſciples in the 10 verſe of this 15 Chapter of *John*, that if they kept his Commandments they ſhould abide in his love, that is (in part) in the ſenſible expreſſions of it, they ſhould find him delighting in them, verſ. 11.

4. *Fer-*

4. *Fervently,* He performeth every act of love in a warm manner; He burneth, his heart boileth in every act of love. As his love is ſtrong, ſo he performeth every act of love with the ſtrength of it. His bowels yern and roul within him, when he pities. He helpeth with all his might: He vehemently gaſpeth after union with them, and enjoyment of them: He delighteth in them with his whole heart and with all his Soul, His heart leapeth within him in acts of delight; He never expreſſeth more to them then is in his heart, nay he never expreſſeth ſo much, he letteth them only ſee what is profitable for them to ſee. This is the manner of the acting of Chriſts love. And thus we ſee the love of Chriſt, after a ſort, in a weak dark manner, opened.

Behold then the Rule ye are to ſet before you, the Copy which ye are to write after in loving one another. Thus hath Chriſt loved his, and thus are they who are Chriſts to love one another, which to imprint the better I ſhall a little briefly recite, as

1. With a love of this nature; not with carnal love, but with ſpiritual love; not with the love of your own old nature, but with the love of the new nature; not with your own natural affection which ye have from *Adam,* but with that new affection which God hath given you from and in Chriſt.

2. Upon ſuch grounds. Not for the lovelineſs of their perſons, the ſweetneſs of their diſpoſition and carriage, or their kindneſs to you or yours, &c. Alas, theſe are too carnal grounds for that love, which is truly ſpiritual, to move upon: Theſe may move your natural affections, (and thoſe indeed ſuch kind of things as theſe ſhould move,) but the love, which is here called for, is ſpiritual, and ſo muſt the grounds be, even

ſuch as Chriſts own love moveth upon, as

The Fathers love to them, and Chriſts love to them. If thou partakeſt of the divine nature, and haſt the ſame love with the Father and with Chriſt, let it follow them in acting. Love what they love, and love becauſe they love.

The Fathers will and Chriſts will, that thou ſhouldſt love them. Let that Will which is the Former of thy love be the guide and ground of thy love.

Their relation to the Father and to Chriſt, yea and to thee too in the Spirit and Body of Chriſt. As thy love is ſpiritual, ſo thou mayſt found it upon thy ſpiritual relation.

Their likeneſs to the Father and to Chriſt, yea and to thy ſelf too in that which is beſt in thee.

If thy love be not ſpiritual, and faſtened upon ſpiritual grounds, it will not laſt. If thou loveſt them for ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, nay for the gifts of God which appear in them; when theſe ſhall at any time fail, thy love wanting its ground-work, will alſo fail: but if it be well-founded, it will then be as firm and as full as ever, when all ſuch conſiderations and motives ſink from under it. O take heed of loving Saints for gifts, not for meer grace; or for the outward lively actings of grace, not for the inward ſubſtance of grace in their hearts.

3. With ſuch ſtrength of love. Come as neer the degree of Chriſts love towards them, as thou canſt. Let thy well-wiſhes be large towards them, (be ever praying for them,) thy deſire of union and communion with them ſtrong, thy readineſs to do them good (even to the laying down of thy life for them) great.

4. Let the actings of thy love remain vigorous towards

wards them in all the varieties of thy conditions, and in all the varieties of their conditions. We are very unlike Chriſt in this reſpect, Our own conditions ſeldom change, our brethrens conditions ſeldom change, but our love varieth towards them.

5. Love in ſuch a manner as Chriſt did. *Be firſt in love*; Aim at a precedency in all the acts of love, who ſhall firſt pity, and who ſhall firſt pardon, &c. Do not ſtay for the workings of their affections to meaſure or let out thine by, (this is a rule corrupt nature hath ſet up, not grace,) but kindle and inflame theirs by thine.

And be ſure to love *purely*. *Love one another with a pure heart*. Never diſhonor God, never do any thing which may hurt them, by any act of love. Never forbear doing them good for fear of croſſing them. Croſs them as much as thou wilt, ſo thou manage it with wiſdom and tenderneſs proportionable for their good. Let all thy oppoſitions againſt them appear to be the oppoſitions of love, formed by love, brought forth with love, and only continued in love. Sweet and wholeſom are thoſe wounds which love meaſures out.

And act love *ſuitably*. When they are in diſtreſs, pity them: When thou ſeeſt them heavy loaden, help to bear their burden with them, *Bear ye one anothers burdens, and ſo fulfil the Law of Chriſt*, (this is a great part of the Law of this Love, which is Chriſts Law, which is his Commandment, the bearing of one anothers weights and preſſures, whether of ſin or ſorrow.) Wherein they are over-layd bear for them, wherein they are weak bear with them, condeſcend to their lowneſs, to their ſhallowneſs, in the things of God; what

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is above their ſtrength do not admit them unto by no means, how angry ſoever they may be thereupon; *him that is weak in the faith receive, but not to doubtful diſputations*, not to the judging and diſcerning of ſuch things as require a greater ſtrength of eye-ſight then is diſpenſed to him. Where thou ſeeſt their hearts act plainly towards God, expreſs delight in them, but take heed of manifeſting delight in them when they are ſtubborn to Chriſt: for thou art not left at liberty to act love to them as thou ſhalt think good, but in a way ſuitable to their conditions. When thou ſeeſt the fleſh prevail in them, thou muſt warn and check them, and complain to the Church of them if need be. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neighbor, and not ſuffer ſin upon him*, Levit. 19. 17. So when thy brother offends thee, thou art firſt to tell him of his fault between him and thee, then to take two or three with thee, and at laſt to acquaint the Church with it, *Mat.* 18. This is not to be done ſimply to get thy ſelf righted, but rather in love to thy brother, for the good of whoſe Soul (as well as for the peace and ſafety of the Church) this Ordinance is appointed. But there is a vaſt difference between theſe things being done from the truth and purity of love, and from a fleſhly ſelfiſh ſpirit, the one ſeeking its brother, the other it ſelf in theſe things.

Act love alſo *fervently*. Let love burn within, and let all the motions and operations of it come forth boiling hot. Pity fervently, pray fervently for them, put forth thy helping hand with ardency of affection. Let there be ſuch an heat in the ſpirit as may cauſe the whole courſe of love ſweetly and warmly to flow from the new nature, that the motions and operations of it may

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not come unkindly and coldly forced out of the old nature. *Is any afflicted, and I burn not?* ſaith *Paul:* and how was he in travel again with the Galatians? *Love one another with a pure heart, fervently.*

Laſtly, Be ſure thou let nothing in or from them mitigate thine affections towards them. It may mitigate thy expreſſions in ſome kinds, but it may not dull thine affections, but whet and ſharpen them to fit them for that which is now proper for them. Though thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee, thou muſt not be provoked by him, but forgive him till ſeventy times ſeven times. Seventy times ſeven times treſpaſs of thy brother againſt thee, muſt not put thee out of a forgiving temper towards him, but thou muſt be as ready, nay more ready to forgive, then he can be prone to offend. Thou muſt not ſay 'tis careleſſneſs or obſtinacy in him, or he might have avoyded it if he would, no not at his ſeventy ſeventh time of his treſpaſſing againſt thee, but thou ſhouldſt be as ready to forgive him as thou waſt or couldſt be the firſt time. We ſhould not be murmuring againſt any miſcarriages of our brethren, but bleſs God who hath taught us and given us grace to pity them, to pray for them, and to be otherwiſe ſweetly and meekly helpful to them in love, towards raiſing and reſtoring of them. And thus the firſt Queſtion is diſpatched, *How Chriſt loveth the Saints?* The ſecond is now to enſue, which is,

Why the heart of Chriſt is ſo much in this thing? why of all Commandments Chriſt picketh out this Command as his, and driveth it home in ſuch a forcible manner upon them, as here he doth?

Anſ. It is not for nothing, or upon no conſideration that the Spirit of Chriſt is thus earneſt, for there is a

weight in the ſpirit of the thing which draweth him. The practiſe of this is of mighty concernment in this diſpenſation of life, which God is pleaſed to miniſter by him, and that both in reſpect of God, and in reſpect of the duty it ſelf.

In reſpect of God. There are ſome conſiderations in reference to him, which cannot but incline Chriſts heart very much unto it; as,

1. Chriſts heart is ſet ſo much upon this thing, becauſe the heart of God is ſo much in it. Chriſt came but as Gods Miniſter, and gave Commandments in Gods Name; The words which he ſpake, and the commands which he gave, were *not his own* primarily, but *his that ſent him*, as he often ſaith. Now the Apoſtle (who lay in Chriſts boſom, and was continually ſearching into his heart, and learning the mind of God there) expreſly telleth us, that this is Gods Commandment. *This is his Commandment, that we ſhould beleeve on the Name of his Son Jeſus Chriſt, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment*, 1 Joh. 3. 23. There were two things which Chriſt eſpecially applyed himſelf unto; firſt to bring men to beleeve on him, and afterwards to love one another, and the reaſon was, becauſe theſe were the eſpecial things which God required. They were firſt Gods chief Commandments, and then Chriſts chief Commandments.

2. Becauſe it is ſo much for the honour of God. To have his children, his family full of love, living in love, acting love in ſtrength one towards another, is greatly for his honour. It is a diſhonour to a Maſter of a family to have his ſervants quarrelling, and his children falling out. It doth not become the God of Love to have his children deſtitute of or ſhort in love, eſpecially one among

mong another. Hatred becometh the Devil and the men of this world, but it is a diſhonour to God to have it found in his children towards one another. Chriſt came with love, and Chriſt came to give and teach love, and it is an honourable badg of them who are taught by him to know God and his Goſpel: It is an honour to them, an honour to him who hath thus dignified and qualified them.

In reſpect of the duty it ſelf. There are ſome conſiderations there too, which were great attractives in the eye and to the heart of Chriſt, to move him vehemently to deſire it in them, and ſo ſtrictly to enjoyn it to them, as namely, Its *excellency* in its own nature, its *comlineſs* in them, and its *profitableneſs* both to them and others. Chriſt loving them ſo much, cannot but much deſire to find in them, that which is exceeding excellent, that which is ſo wondrous comely, and that which cannot but be ſo richly profitable whereſoever it is.

1. It is a duty of a moſt *excellent* nature. Love is the moſt excellent of all graces, (the Apoſtle ranks it in the firſt place of the moſt choyce graces, the greateſt whereof he affirmeth to be love, 1 *Cor.*13.13.) therefore the actings of love muſt needs be the moſt excellent of all actings. That grace which is of the moſt excellent nature, and which hath the ſtrongeſt influence into all the work we are to do for God, is love; and anſwerably the actings of love have the moſt noble and lively operations in them. It is both the moſt quickening and moſt mortifying grace, having leaſt of ſelf, moſt of God in it. Faith goeth out much for ſelf (for its own ſafety and ſalvation, for the ſupply of its own wants) but love always for another. And in loving one another, the cleareſt, pureſt and excellenteſt acts of love

do ſhoot forth; becauſe there often appeareth that in this object which would take away or at leaſt ſtop love in its current, if it were not very clear, pure and excellent. There are always *infirmities* there at leaſt, if not *corruptions*, and perhaps unkind actings towards us alſo, which have too too much influence upon the beſt in damping their love. God is ſuch an object of love, that even the eye of Nature ſeeth lovelineſs in him, and calleth for love towards him, and that ſo ſtrongly, that it hideth the natural enmity that is in men againſt him from their own eyes, in ſo much as they think they love him, and cannot but love him, though in truth they hate him: but as for the Saints, there are abundance of unlovely things in them, hardly any thing lovely but the grace of Chriſt, and commonly that alſo covered with much unlovelineſs.

There is likewiſe uſually that in this object of love, which moſt ſetteth off the actings of faith. What is it moſt commends the actings of faith, but its duration and activity in the midſt of that which is contrary and dangerous to it? As when God diſtreſſeth the Soul, appearing as an enemy, ſeeming even to kill faith it ſelf, taking away all viſible ground of hope in him, for faith now to continue, yea and act ſtill in ſtrength, exceedingly commends the vertue and excellency of its nature. Why love hath this tryal very frequently, It hath ſtill almoſt ſomewhat or other in the Saints to ſlacken it, if not quite to eat it out; much unlovelineſs of their own appearing amidſt a little lovelineſs of grace, yea and perhaps that little grace hid too, and nothing but corruption viſible: So that love towards this object thus held on, is an excellent duty indeed.

2. It is a *comely* duty. *O how comely is it for brethren*

to live together in unity, to love and cherish one another! There are two things which much adorn Religion, obedience to God, and love to our brethren. It is an uncomely thing to see men fall out because they are of one nature, which is a strong bond of agreement, yea stronger and more extensive then is in the rest of the creatures: but O how uncomely is it to see Saints fall out, who meet in the bonds of so excellent a nature as theirs is! To see the world hate them, and make a prey of them, is no more wonder, then to see a Wolf persecute and prey upon a Lamb: yet if they were of the world, the world would love them; *If ye were of the world, the world would love its own*, Joh. 15. 19. It is such a piece of uncomelinesse as the world is ashamed to be guilty of, not to love its own; do ye not see every thing, throughout the world, tender of its own? how much more uncomely is it for you, who have a closer union then this world knoweth of, to hate one another!

Every nature hath a love proportionable suited to it, which is comely, and the contrary whereof is uncomely. This is the most excellent nature, and therefore hath the highest love suited to it, and the greatest comelinesse attends it, and the contrary thereunto must needs be most uncomely. *O how comely is it for brethren to live together in unity*: for Jews, for true Jews, who are brethren in Christ, to live together in the union and love of Christ; who can express how comely, how sweet, how pleasant it is?

3. It is a *profitable* duty. As it is of the most excellent nature of all graces, so it is the most profitable, bringing forth fruit answerable to the excellency of its nature. It is profitable to others, It is profitable to themselves. It

It is profitable to others, and that to all ſorts of men whatſoever, whether a friend or an enemy, whether in an unconverted eſtate, or in what condition ſoever being converted.

1. To men in an unconverted eſtate. There is a double profit may ariſe unto them from the actings of love.

1. It will make them take more notice of Chriſt and of his ways. This kind of love exerciſed among the Saints, will make the world begin to perceive that their life is more ſublime and weighty, then the life which is in the world is: it will help to convince them and force them to ſee what their eyes are ſhut againſt, namely the reality of the life and power of Chriſt, and the truth of their relation to him. *By this ſhall all men know that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have love one to another,* Joh. 13.35.

2. If exerciſed towards the world (as it cannot but break forth that way alſo) it cannot but melt them. Harſh ways harden, but ſweet ways melt. Paſſion breaking forth ſeldom doth good, but acts of affection are very powerful. This is *an heaping coals of fire upon their head,* which will aſſuredly melt them at laſt, *Rom.* 12.20. for none is able to ſtand before the inchantments of the truth and power of love. Yea this, the very worlds ſight of the exerciſe of love of the brethren among themſelves, may in a great degree produce, though not ſo fully as if it were exerciſed much and ſeveral ways towards the world it ſelf.

2. To men in a converted eſtate. There is nothing more uſeful to them in what condition ſoever they be, then love. What ever faith it ſelf can do for them, love muſt quicken and give vent to; *Faith worketh by love.*

Love

Love, as it is generally ſerviceable and profitable, ſo eſpecially to fellow-Saints, and to them it cannot but be profitable, what ever they be, where ever they be, how ever it be with them. Be they weak or ſtrong, ſtanding or falling, ſweet or ſullen in their ſpirits, any other way rightly tempered or diſtempered, how ever inclined or acted, love rightly going forth towards them, is very fit to do them good, which will eaſily appear if we conſider theſe few properties in love.

1. It hath an *edifying* property. The great uſe both of offices and gifts in the Church, is the edification of the Church: but love is more profitable to edification then all gifts whatſoever. The Apoſtle ſetteth up prophecying above all other gifts in this reſpect, and yet layeth that alſo flat before love, 1 *Cor.* 13. We do not take a right courſe, ſo much to bewail the loſs of gifts, we ſhould firſt and chiefly bewail the loſs of love. We might do well enough without gifts, if we had but love enough: but we could not poſſibly edifie without love, had we never ſo many gifts. They are not gifts ſimply, but grace which edifieth, which love is, whereas gifts are not ſo: And gifts when they do edifie muſt be ſubordinated under and ordered by grace. It is not thy gift, but the grace of Chriſt in thy brother, which maketh him edifie by thy gift. Therefore though thy gift be never ſo large, and never ſo well improved and employed, yet if the heart of thy brother be not in a gracious frame, he is not edified thereby. Yea further, it is not the learning more of the knowledg & myſteries of Chriſt (which is the proper end of gifts) but love which edifieth; A man may be ſwelled up by knowledg, but it is love whereby he both edifieth and is edified, *Knowledg puffeth up, but love edifieth.* It is not ſimply the uſe of

of a gift, but the gracious uſe of it, the uſe of it in love which edifieth, in ſo much as that a little delivered in a ſweet gracious manner, will edifie much more then a great deal delivered by vertue of a gift. Gifts without grace diſpoſe us rather to ſlight and caſt off perſons, then to take that pains which is neceſſary to edification, the will whereunto, and skill wherein, only love hath.

2. It hath an *aſſiſting* property. Love is ever ready to aid and aſſiſt. Love will ſet its ſhoulder to every burden, lend its hand to every work. What is there, or can there be to be done, which love will not help to do?

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love to us: It is love in him to us, which maketh him ſo ſtrictly to lay this Commandment upon us of loving one another: He knew how uſeful it would be for us, and therefore in a more then ordinary manner he enjoyneth it unto us.)

And thus we ſee the Reaſon why Chriſt beateth ſo much on this ſubject, why his heart is ſo much in it, why he maketh it his Commandment? It is a thing which his Father much deſireth, and is much for his Fathers honour: It is exceedingly uſeful to his Saints; both them that practiſe it, and all to whom they practiſe it: and can you blame Chriſt in laying ſo much weight upon it?

To propoſe now a little Application of all this.

Is the heart of Chriſt ſo much in this thing? is this his eſpecial Commandment, his peculiar Commandment, the Commandment of his choyce, which his Soul ſo thirſteth after to have obſerved by us, That we ſhould love one another as he hath loved us? Then,

1. What ſhall we ſay to our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when we come to ſtand before him and his Father, in the preſence of all his Saints and Angels, for our ſo groſs neglect of this duty?

When this Law ſhall be read before us (*This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, &c.*) and the often preſſings of it by Chriſt himſelf and by his Apoſtles throughout all the New Teſtament; and when our hearts and actions ſhall be looked into, and ſo little of it found in either?

When the Saints in the Apoſtles times ſhall riſe up, and their hearts ſhall be opened, which were ſo full of love and entireneſs, that they could ſpend and be ſpent one for another?

When

When the Saints under the ten Perſecutions ſhall ariſe, whoſe love is reported to have been ſo firm and large, that the very Perſecutors themſelves did bear witneſs unto it, and were amazed at it?

When the hearts of worldlings ſhall be ripped up, and ſtronger love appear there towards their fellow-worldlings, then in the Chriſtians of this generation towards their fellow-Chriſtians?

When men directly-wicked ſhall appear to have loved the image of the Devil better in one another, then we the image of God and of Chriſt?

Yea when our own hearts ſhall be ripped up, and the actings of our natural affection being made viſible, it ſhall appear concerning our ſelves that we gave ſcope to that, but the new nature, and the powers of love in it, have been rather choaked in us, then drawn forth towards one another?

What ſhall we ſay in our own behalfs? We can blame one another very ſorely now in caſes of far inferior conſequence, but how ſhall we anſwer this our ſelves before the Judg? We own the life of Chriſt in one another, but alas where is our love to that life! We ſay Chriſt is our Lord, why this is his great Commandment, that wherein his very heart and ſoul and ſpirit is, where is our obedience? who can anſwer this in his own ſpirit now? and if not now, how will he be able to acquit himſelf then, when the light ſhall be perfectly clear, and all the fig-leaves, wherewith we now ſo cunningly cover the evil of our hearts, ways, motions and actions from our own eyes, quite taken away, and made altogether unable from affording any ſhelter to us?

2. It may occaſion an enquiry, why love ſhould be

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ſo barren, ſo dead among Chriſtians? ſo backward in its growth, ſo prone to decay? That little life and vertue which it had among us once, where is it? I ſhall not proſecute this enquiry ſo far as it lieth open to me, but mention only theſe two cauſes from whence it may very well ariſe.

1. From a decay of grace in us, from our decay in love to Chriſt; or at leaſt from the weakneſs of it, where it is not decayed. Were grace ſtrong, were love to Chriſt ſtrong, we could not chuſe but love thoſe that are Chriſts more. If we did not fail in love towards him who doth beget, we ſhould better love thoſe who are begotten by him.

2. From a careleſſneſs in acting the duty. We are not careful to draw out a ſpiritual affection (and a natural affection will not do it,) and upon ſpiritual grounds, and with a ſpiritual fervency, and in a ſpiritual manner: but we go to love Saints, as we do other men. We do not ſimply love grace in them, There muſt be ſomewhat beſides grace to draw forth and continue our affections, or elſe they warp. Our love goeth forth in fleſh, and not to the pure life, but partly towards fleſh, which it many times miſſing of, there preſently groweth a faintneſs and decay of love. If love were more pure in us, and were drawn forth more purely from us towards its own pure object, it would be more laſting.

3. It ſpeaks out a very ſtrong Exhortation, of it ſelf inviting and vehemently perſwading Chriſtians to preſs hard after this duty, and never to give their ſpirits reſt till this duty be as much in their hearts and lives, as it is in the heart of Chriſt concerning them.

For the proſecution of this Exhortation, I ſhall propound

pound ſome few Motives to it, ſome Directions concerning it, and likewiſe ſome Helps towards it.

To begin with the Motives. Though all that hath been ſaid be of a ſtirring attractive nature, yet it may not be amiſs at laſt caſt to drive in two or three nails again.

Firſt then, Conſider this well, that this is the way which Chriſt himſelf hath appointed us to expreſs our love to him in. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments*; and what Commandments? *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another. Peter, loveſt thou me? feed my Lambs:* If thou loveſt me, ſhew it, and if thou wilt ſhew it, ſhew it in thy love and care of my Lambs; what thou doſt to them, thou doſt to me. Our goodneſs cannot reach God or Chriſt, but the Saints, *Pſal.* 16. 2.

2. Remember that this will yeeld unto Chriſt matter of joy in you. He rejoyceth in working this love in you, and he will rejoyce more in the continuance, growth and exerciſe of this love. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you that my joy might remain in you*, ſaith he in the very next words to this Text, verſ. 11. of the 15 Chapt. It will continually adminiſter joy to the Spirit of Chriſt, to find love flouriſhing in you one to another.

3. Remember alſo that it will be an occaſion of filling your own ſpirits with joy, ſo it is alſo expreſſed in that verſ. 11. *Theſe things have I ſpoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.* It is incredible what fulneſs of joy ſtreams along in the ſweetneſs of love: beſides, it is the delight of Chriſt to fill his ſpirit with joy, whoſe ſpirit he hath already filled with love.

Quest. But how may I attain this duty? I find my ſpirit much inflamed with it, O that I might be a little guided to it.

Anſ. If thou beeſt not better provided apply thy ſelf to the obſervation of theſe few Directions.

1. Set this duty clearly before thine eyes. Conſider well what kind of love it muſt be, upon what grounds it is to be faſtened and carried on, in what degree, what muſt be the actings of it, and in what manner it is to act. Chriſtians commonly do not underſtand what they do, when they buckle to this duty, nor how purely and firmly this affection muſt move, notwithſtanding all manner of diſcouragements from them we love, which cannot but cauſe them much to falter in the performance of it.

2. Be working up thy heart to it dayly. Be working it up to a ſpiritual love, be working ſpiritual grounds into thy heart, that thy ſpirit may be engaged and move ſpiritually. Thou muſt be a kind of husbandman to the ſeed of the life of God in thee, thou muſt receive it, thou muſt cheriſh it, and thou muſt provoke it unto motion. This thou muſt be doing, though thou canſt not do this nor any thing elſe that is ſpiritual. Wonderfully ſtrange and myſterious is the operation of God in the Goſpel: He works all in us of his own pleaſure, and yet ſo as if we moved and wrought all our ſelves. The Lord lieth hidden in all the motions of our ſpirits, and by an unſeen ſtrength, vertue and influence doth all there, yea even that which we ſeem to do our ſelves; and yet we muſt up and be doing every thing, though we can do nothing.

3. Intreat God to write this Law in thy bowels. God wrote it in Chriſts heart, and he muſt alſo write it in thine,

thine, if ever it be found there. Therefore pray to God to write it there, and to write it there abundantly; that as he hath bid thee love all Saints, ſo he would give thee love large enough to go forth fully towards all Saints. We muſt be taught of God to love one another, if ever we learn this Leſſon.

4. Intreat God to draw forth this love, when ever thou art to act it. If we ſee a thing to be duty, we preſently ſet about it, and blame our hearts if they fall ſhort in it. This we ſhould do indeed, but we ſhould alſo when this is done (or rather while this is in doing) go to God, in whom all our ſtrength lies, to perform it in us. And this we might do at firſt, if we were but ſenſible enough of our own weakneſs without a practical experiment; but therefore God puts us continually upon endeavoring our ſelves, becauſe we forget how weak and unable we are to do any thing, any longer then we find it in our utmoſt ſtrivings. Go therefore to God, who hath promiſed not only to *write his Law in our hearts*, but to *cauſe* us to *walk in his ways*. What ever way of God there is, God will not only write the Law of it in the hearts of his people, but he will make them walk in it. He will put ſuch affections and ſtrength into them, that they ſhall not be able to forbear walking therein.

Queſt. But are there no Helps which may further me herein? Thoſe which are skilfully practical know how to lead another into that path wherein they themſelves have walked. If you have met with any knowledg or experience in this kind, O do not hide it from us, but help us a little in this track which is ſo auk and difficult to the ſpirit of man.

Anſ. What I have found moſt beneficial unto and

powerful with my ſelf herein, I ſhall very willingly impart unto you in whom this deſire is kindled. Therefore from my own proof and experience I ſhall commend unto you theſe four Helps.

1. Would you love the Saints as Chriſt hath loved both them and you? Then, in the firſt place, Look upon them in Chriſt, and there thou ſhalt ever ſee them full objects for thy love. Thus God looketh upon us in our wretched eſtate (even in Chriſt) or he could never continue loving us. O how lovely are the Saints in Chriſt! They are imputatively perfect in him at preſent, (God reckons ſo, and why ſhouldſt not thou reckon ſo?) and they ſhall be abſolutely perfect ere long. They ſhall be made perfectly like Chriſt, and have all thoſe ſpots taken away which now thou eſpieſt in them, which are left upon them at preſent, not to make them unlovely in thine eyes, but for a deſign which God hath for his own glory, the good of all Saints, and thine in particular. If a pure ſpiritual eye were always thus faſtened upon them, a pure ſpiritual heart would always love them.

2. Expect all manner of weakneſſes and imperfections in them. Look for diſtempers upon them, and all manner of evil breaking forth and taking its ſwinge in them, ſo far as God leaves them. Doſt thou not find it ſo in thine own heart?

This is another means whereby God ſtrengthens his heart in loving us. He expects no manner of good from us, but what he himſelf works in us: He expects all manner of evils and diſtempers which he himſelf doth not prevent. And all the evil that iſſueth forth, he attributeth not to us, but to ſin that dwelleth in us. Why go thou and do likewiſe, and thou wilt love as God loveth.

Paul

Paul doth thus concerning himſelf. The good I would do I cannot, nor avoyd the evil which I would not do, but *what I hate that do I, oh wretched man, &c.* I can expect no good from my ſelf, I can hinder no evil in my ſelf: but yet 'tis not I, but ſin that dwells in me. It is the unlovely part, that which I am to hate, not that which I am to love, which doth this.

There are two great faults in us. We do not labour enough to be holy our ſelves, and we expect it too much in others. If we did look for holineſs more in our own hearts, and expect it leſs in others, this duty would be far eaſier then it is. But when we expect much, what ever falleth ſhort of our expectation diſpleaſeth us, and dampeth our affections.

3. Be ever ſtirring up their graces in them, and mark the workings of their graces in the midſt of their diſtempers. This will ſtill keep thine eye upon their lovelineſs at all times, and ſo will ſtill draw forth love towards them.

1. Be ever ſtirring up their graces in them. Grace is the proper attractive of ſpiritual love, the ſight whereof cannot but kindle it. Thus Chriſt makes the flowers and ſpices in his garden to yield their ſavour, and then falls in love with their ſcent. We think it is the duty of others to give forth their light and diſcover their graces to us; but we are apt to forget that it is alſo our duty to be drawing forth their light, and ſtirring up their graces. This was *Pauls* practiſe (that great Lover of the Saints,) *Rom.* 1. 11, & 12. *For I long to ſee you, that I may impart unto you ſome ſpiritual gift, to the end you may be eſtabliſhed. That is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.* This was his deſign and courſe when ever he came among Saints, to

ſee what grace they had in them, to ſearch out and ſtir up grace, that he might draw forth his own love in enjoying of them, in delighting in them, and in adding ſomewhat to them ſuitable to their ſtate and condition.

2. Obſerve the workings of their graces in the midſt of their diſtempers. We are uſually exceedingly faulty in this: We never conſider the diſtempers in Chriſtians, but look they ſhould always act as if they were in a right temper, (though we expect they ſhould conſider our diſtempers.) And then in their diſtempers we mark the ſtirrings of their corruptions, but though grace ſtrive and help much to the keeping of them down, we take little notice of that. Whereas God conſiders the leaſt diſtempers in us, and cheriſheth and is delighted with the leaſt motions of grace in us in our diſtempers. If it were otherwiſe, what would become of us?

4. Conſider thine own weakneſſes and ſins. Doth any evil befall thy brother which thou canſt avoyd? Doth thy brother neglect any good which thou canſt do? He hath fallen into this or that evil; who hath kept thy heart? How long wilt thou keep out of the ſame evil into which thy brother is fallen, if God leave thee to the ſame temptation? Conſider therefore the breakings forth of thine own heart in ſin, where God doth ſuffer it; and how far it would break forth if God did not hinder it. And take heed of murmuring againſt thy brother as one that falls into ſins, breeds troubles, hinders mercies, interrupts the ſweetneſs of communion, &c.

There is a very notable place to this purpoſe, *Jam.* 5.9. *Groan not one againſt another, Brethren, leſt ye be condemned: behold the Judg ſtandeth before the door.* Our ſpirits will be very apt to groan one againſt another, O

ſuch

ſuch an one hath hindred much good, if it had not been for him things might have gone well. Take heed, the Judg ſtands at the door, who will come and rip open thy heart and thy ways, and ſhew thee ſomewhat which thou little thoughtſt of, and ſo thou who groaneſt againſt another wilt be condemned thy ſelf. Nay *though thou haſt ſpoken to them in the Name of the Lord,* (as he carrieth it, verſ. 10.) and they may ſeem to have deſpiſed thy meſſage, nay have really both deſpiſed thee and the Lord in whoſe Name thou haſt ſpoken; yet take heed of ſo much as groaning againſt them, leſt the Judg alſo find matter againſt thee. It is not fit for one guilty perſon to breathe out complaints againſt another.

Therefore conſider thine own heart well, and obſerve the failings there; Are there not more there then in thy brothers, all things conſidered? And conſider if thou wouldſt be willing to have Chriſt withdraw his heart from thee, or whether thou wouldſt have him take occaſion hereby to exerciſe towards thee ſuch acts of love as thy need now requires, as to pity thee, to ſtand ready to help thee, to take that courſe which may beſt help thee, &c. If ſo, go and do ſo to thy brother. If thou wouldſt have him keep that Law of Love which God hath given him concerning thee, do thou by his ſtrength improve his grace to the keeping of that Law of Love which he hath given thee concerning thy fellow-Saints: *and this is his Commandment, that we love one another as he hath loved us.*

Now for a cloſe, that he that readeth may underſtand.

All this is but an exerciſe by way of Diſcipline to the ſeed in its childhood, as indeed all other things alſo are. The

threat-

threatnings, the rewards, the promiſes, the comforts, the enjoyments, &c. in every diſpenſation, are ſuited to the ſtate of the child.

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Q. *How can he poſſibly do this?*

A. He cannot miſs of it the way that he takes, which is, by taking the whole work of each upon him (he being ſufficiently furniſhed to do it, by the Law of Life in himſelf) that neither ſhall expect any thing from the other, but only from him, who as he is powerful, ſo he promiſeth to be faithful unto each. God knowing his power and fidelity, is eaſily ſatisfied; and when he is a little acquainted with them (or rather they with him) he maketh them ſenſible thereof likewiſe, and faileth not of begetting confidence alſo in them.

Q. *What doth he undertake in reference to God?*

A. Theſe two things.

1. To give him full ſatisfaction for the offence committed.

mitted. Let Juſtice cry with open mouth, it ſhall be filled, it ſhall have enough.

2. To fit them fully for him: To make them a fit Spouſe, a fit Temple, a fit Habitation for his Life, Majeſty and Holineſs.

Q. *What ſatisfaction doth he give to God?*

A. He pays him in the coyn wherein he was robed, and that very perfectly ſtamped, for he giveth him both active and paſſive obedience in every thing he calls for from him. He doth his Will and ſuffereth his Will as much and as long as he pleaſeth. This he did all his life, and at laſt at his death gives him a full round ſum of both, in ſacrificing himſelf to his pleaſure, which was both his act (for he gave himſelf, he gave up his life,) and his paſſion (for he ſuffered moſt deeply in it.)

Q. *How doth he fit them for God?*

A. Three ways.

1. By cleanſing them from all their pollutions.

2. By filling them both within and without with all ſuch riches, glory and beauty as is comely in the eye of God.

3. By turning their hearts towards God: for all manner of fitneſs without this will not make a match.

Now theſe though they be diſtinct works, yet they are done together. They are begun together, they are carried on together, they are perfected together.

Q. *But by what means doth Chriſt accompliſh all this?*

A. By working repentance and faith in them, and by cauſing repentance and faith to grow up in them: for hereby he both changeth their natures, and tranſplanteth them; ſo that they are no more what they were, nor where they were; ſo that God cannot look upon them either as ſuch as they were, or as in ſuch a ſtate as

they were in, for Chriſt (who is real in his operations) hath really changed them in both reſpects.

Q. *What is Repentance?*

A. It is the turning of the heart from ſin, upon the ſight of the evil and miſery of it, ſhewn by Chriſt to the eye of the new nature. (Repentance is only the diverſion from, the converſion to, is faith, or an act of faith.) He giveth them a ſight of the evil of ſin, of what a loathſom nature it is, how filthy and odious it maketh them in themſelves and to every pure eye; as alſo of the miſery of it, which is both preſent ſlavery and future condemnation and wrath: And hereby he turneth their hearts clean from it, that they deſire nothing more then to be fairly rid of it.

Q. *What is Faith?*

A. It is a receiving of Chriſt into the underſtanding, into the heart, into the whole man; and a giving up of the underſtanding, heart and all unto Chriſt. It is a taking in and a giving it ſelf up unto *the leaven of the Kingdom.* It is the Souls glue, given it by Chriſt, whereby it clings and faſtens to Chriſt, and whereby it faſtens Chriſt to it ſelf.

(It is a very curious work, requiring very accurate skill, which Chriſt operateth between God and his people. He offereth force to neither, but dealeth with each ſuitable to their natures, and by his skill and power therein, worketh and bringeth both about.)

Q. *How doth Chriſt work repentance and faith in them?*

A. He beſtows them upon them. He ſendeth his *Word,* the Goſpel of the Kingdom, by his Miniſters, wherein or in which Veſſel is this ſeed of Light, of Life, of Liberty, which he diſtills or drops into their underſtandings, and into their hearts, whereby (by the preſence

ſence of which, by the growth of which, by the influence and operation of which) he gaineth upon them.

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A. Two things.

1. To give them in the pardon of their ſins from God, ſo that they ſhall find them waſhed off from their own Conſciences, they ſhall feel him at peace with them. This was not an imaginary act of the Soul (as it is very much now adays) but a real act of God, really tranſacted by God upon the Soul, and really ſeen by the eye of the Soul, and truly felt in the heart and ſpirit.

2. Communion with God, both in ſuch a degree as is needful for them at preſent, and in perfection of glory at laſt. They are ſons now, heirs at preſent, having fellowſhip with God as his ſons, as his heirs; but then, in the time of it, they ſhall enjoy their inheritance, which is reſerved for them till they be grown up.

Q. *But may not God and they fall out afterwards as they did before, and ſo their end prove worſe then their beginning?*

A. No, for Chriſt undertaketh to preſerve them, to keep them ſafe from all evils and dangers, in ſo much as they ſhall not fall upon them further then ſhall be for their good: to work in them and for them all their works: to keep off wrath, that it ſhall ſeize no further upon them, then he himſelf in wiſdom and love ſeeth good to let it out. In a word: God ſhall never have more to ſay to them, but from him; nor they never have more to do with God, but through him, who loveth them perfectly, and who as he began, ſo he will continue meerly from the ſtrength of his own love to perfect his own work in them, which though his wiſdom may cauſe him to carry on very myſteriouſly, yet

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A. By his mediation between God and them, the anointing fitting him, and he making uſe of the anointing to the utmoſt, to work both unto terms of hearty agreement. For he undertaketh to ſtand as a middle perſon between them, equal to each, propoſing ſuch terms whereon they may agree without prejudice or detriment on either ſide; and to ratifie and eſtabliſh this agreement himſelf, ſo as they ſhall never have cauſe more of variance on either hand. He takes off the old occaſion wholly, and will not ſuffer any new ſeeds of diviſion to be ſown, or any new occaſion of difference to ariſe.

Q. *How can he poſſibly do this?*

A. He cannot miſs of it the way that he takes, which is, by taking the whole work of each upon him (he being ſufficiently furniſhed to do it, by the Law of Life in himſelf) that neither ſhall expect any thing from the other, but only from him, who as he is powerful, ſo he promiſeth to be faithful unto each. God knowing his power and fidelity, is eaſily ſatisfied; and when he is a little acquainted with them (or rather they with him) he maketh them ſenſible thereof likewiſe, and faileth not of begetting confidence alſo in them.

Q. *What doth he undertake in reference to God?*

A. Theſe two things.

1. To give him full ſatisfaction for the offence committed.

mitted. Let Juſtice cry with open mouth, it ſhall be filled, it ſhall have enough.

2. To fit them fully for him: To make them a fit Spouſe, a fit Temple, a fit Habitation for his Life, Majeſty and Holineſs.

Q. *What ſatisfaction doth he give to God?*

A. He pays him in the coyn wherein he was robed, and that very perfectly ſtamped, for he giveth him both active and paſſive obedience in every thing he calls for from him. He doth his Will and ſuffereth his Will as much and as long as he pleaſeth. This he did all his life, and at laſt at his death gives him a full round ſum of both, in ſacrificing himſelf to his pleaſure, which was both his act (for he gave himſelf, he gave up his life,) and his paſſion (for he ſuffered moſt deeply in it.)

Q. *How doth he fit them for God?*

A. Three ways.

1. By cleanſing them from all their pollutions.

2. By filling them both within and without with all ſuch riches, glory and beauty as is comely in the eye of God.

3. By turning their hearts towards God: for all manner of fitneſs without this will not make a match.

Now theſe though they be diſtinct works, yet they are done together. They are begun together, they are carried on together, they are perfected together.

Q. *But by what means doth Chriſt accompliſh all this?*

A. By working repentance and faith in them, and by cauſing repentance and faith to grow up in them: for hereby he both changeth their natures, and tranſplanteth them; ſo that they are no more what they were, nor where they were; ſo that God cannot look upon them either as ſuch as they were, or as in ſuch a ſtate as

they were in, for Chriſt (who is real in his operations) hath really changed them in both reſpects.

Q. *What is Repentance?*

A. It is the turning of the heart from ſin, upon the ſight of the evil and miſery of it, ſhewn by Chriſt to the eye of the new nature. (Repentance is only the diverſion from, the converſion to, is faith, or an act of faith.) He giveth them a ſight of the evil of ſin, of what a loathſom nature it is, how filthy and odious it maketh them in themſelves and to every pure eye; as alſo of the miſery of it, which is both preſent ſlavery and future condemnation and wrath: And hereby he turneth their hearts clean from it, that they deſire nothing more then to be fairly rid of it.

Q. *What is Faith?*

A. It is a receiving of Chriſt into the underſtanding, into the heart, into the whole man; and a giving up of the underſtanding, heart and all unto Chriſt. It is a taking in and a giving it ſelf up unto *the leaven of the Kingdom*. It is the Souls glue, given it by Chriſt, whereby it clings and faſtens to Chriſt, and whereby it faſtens Chriſt to it ſelf.

(It is a very curious work, requiring very accurate skill, which Chriſt operateth between God and his people. He offereth force to neither, but dealeth with each ſuitable to their natures, and by his skill and power therein, worketh and bringeth both about.)

Q. *How doth Chriſt work repentance and faith in them?*

A. He beſtows them upon them. He ſendeth his *Word*, the Goſpel of the Kingdom, by his Miniſters, wherein or in which Veſſel is this ſeed of Light, of Life, of Liberty, which he diſtills or drops into their underſtandings, and into their hearts, whereby (by the preſence

ſence of which, by the growth of which, by the influence and operation of which) he gaineth upon them.

Q. *What doth he undertake in reference to them?*

A. Two things.

1. To give them in the pardon of their ſins from God, ſo that they ſhall find them waſhed off from their own Conſciences, they ſhall feel him at peace with them. This was not an imaginary act of the Soul (as it is very much now adays) but a real act of God, really tranſacted by God upon the Soul, and really ſeen by the eye of the Soul, and truly felt in the heart and ſpirit.

2. Communion with God, both in ſuch a degree as is needful for them at preſent, and in perfection of glory at laſt. They are ſons now, heirs at preſent, having fellowſhip with God as his ſons, as his heirs; but then, in the time of it, they ſhall enjoy their inheritance, which is reſerved for them till they be grown up.

Q. *But may not God and they fall out afterwards as they did before, and ſo their end prove worſe then their beginning?*

A. No, for Chriſt undertaketh to preſerve them, to keep them ſafe from all evils and dangers, in ſo much as they ſhall not fall upon them further then ſhall be for their good: to work in them and for them all their works: to keep off wrath, that it ſhall ſeize no further upon them, then he himſelf in wiſdom and love ſeeth good to let it out. In a word: God ſhall never have more to ſay to them, but from him; nor they never have more to do with God, but through him, who loveth them perfectly, and who as he began, ſo he will continue meerly from the ſtrength of his own love to perfect his own work in them, which though his wiſdom may cauſe him to carry on very myſteriouſly, yet

his love will not let him fail doing of it very ſafely.

Q. *What muſt he do who is inſtated in this Salvation, in and for whom this Redemption is begun by Jeſus Chriſt?*

A. He muſt be continually ſacrificing himſelf by the Spirit of the Lord (in which he that is in Chriſt lives and moves and acts) until he become an whole burnt-offering unto the Lord: until all his light, all his life, all his will be ſwallowed up and perfectly loſt in the Light, in the Life, in the Will of the Lord. Not only until his corruption be diſſolved and conſumed, but till his very nature and being (in all the powers, motions and operations of it) be changed into the Nature and Being of the Lord: until the new creature hath wholy ſpred it ſelf all over him, and he be become wholy a new lump. This, he who is not truly changed, cannot do; and he who is truly changed cannot but do.

A Poſtſcript about Religion.

THere have always been *two kinds of Religions* in the world, (beſides the ſeveral ſtrains in each, and the ſeveral ways of jumbling each together, which the vain heart of man hath invented to entangle and vex it ſelf withall,) The one *Heatheniſh* or *Deviliſh*, The other *Heavenly* or *Divine*; The one wrought out of the Earth by the aſſiſtance of Satan, The other let down into the Earth by the Spirit of the Lord.

The whole Earth is ſtill taken up about *Religion*. It is both *natural* and *artificial*, and that about which the whole ſtrength of Nature and Art is moſt employed.

There

There hath not been any part of the Earth ſo barbarous, wherein there have not been ſome ſtrains of devotion found. There is every where (where the nature of man appears, where the art of man is exerciſed, and where there is any breath either of God or Satan ſtiring) ſome kind of ſeed, and ſome kind of culture of *Religion*.

The main end of Religion (in reference to us) is *Salvation*. Not only preſent relief and protection in our preſent feeble eſtate, but Salvation in a future eſtate, which the very nature of man pointeth him unto, and teacheth him to look after. We are at preſent involved in miſery, we feel it: Every creature feeleth it according to its kind, and we according to our kind. There is ſome future eſtate of things unto which we all are paſſing: And this preſent eſtate, though it be wholy vain in reference to us, as we now are, yet it cannot be at all vain in reference to that; but that which is perfect muſt of neceſſity order every thing perfectly to its end, ſo that nothing be loſt, not any one motion of any creature in any kind.

Now this is moſt evident, That though all men almoſt expect Salvation, yet the attainment of it will be very rare. The common paths of Heatheniſh Worſhip will not lead to it, and in the midſt of the Diſpenſations of God there are few who truly walk to it. How few of the *Jews*, under the Diſpenſation of the Law, did truly walk towards Salvation! And how many *Diſciples*, under the Goſpel, ran ſo as they could not obtain! *Many ſhall ſay, Lord, Lord, open to us*; but the *Lord* ſhall anſwer them, *Verily I know you not*. They ſhall ſpeak like perſons well acquainted with the Lord, and very ſure of entrance: but the Lord will diſown them,

them, and tell them publiquely, Of a truth I know you not.

Doth it not then behove every one to look about him? It is very ill trifling about Eternity. Thou wilt one day be ashamed, O confident Soul, who hast sought for *the treasure* in the wrong field; who hast layd out *thy mony for that which is not bread,* and thy pains for that which will not satisfie. Wouldst thou but consider how unable thou art to justifie thy Religion now, I speak to the most strict, to the most exact persons living, I say, bring thy Religion to that touchstone which may now be held forth, how wilt thou manifest it to thine own spirit to be weighty! Thou *knowest*, thou *beleevest*, thou *lovest*, thou *obeyest*. Very good. But how wilt thou justifie any of these? I dare boldly affirm, that unless thou hast seen the stamp of God (with the eye of a true understanding, 1 *Joh.* 5.20.) thou canst not be able to say that these are of his stamp; and unless they be of the stamp of God, and have the very Nature and Life of God in them, I am sure they shall not save thee. Ah foolish man, Because thou hast lighted upon the Scriptures, and readest, and heares, and prayest, and conformest thy life (as well as thou canst) to the directions thereof, yea prayest for the help of the Spirit, acknowledging thine own weakness and unprofitableness, &c. dost thou think to be saved? Dost thou not know that the *root* of all this is rejected by the Lord, and can any of the *fruit* be accepted? I can assure thee, the spirit of man will do this, and the spirit of man in thee may do this. (The Lord hath written this in the nature and present state of man, and when he pleaseth he may draw it out.) And seeing with God it is all one to will as to do, the spirit of man, which is universally willing unto this,

shall

ſhall be as well accepted herein as thine. He who would have been wrought upon to do this, is as juſtifiable before God, as thou who haſt been wrought upon, and haſt done it: And thou who art *uncircumciſed in heart* (for that which thou calleſt the circumciſion is no more it, then that which the Jews called ſo) art as loathſom before God, as thoſe who are uncircumciſed in their outward practiſes and profeſſions.

Let me plead a little further with thee. Doſt thou know what the ſpirit of man can do, when his whole nature, when all his underſtanding, his affections and paſſions are purified and heightened? It is a dull frothy ſtupified ſpirit, which can pleaſe it ſelf in this droſſy world, a ſpirit a little ſublimated, a little enlightened, a little quickened, cannot but mind things of another nature, even ſuch as are ſuitable to its inward part, and the future eſtate thereof: And what would not a natural ſpirit throughly ſenſible do, to avoyd its perfect miſery, and attain its perfect life, reſt and happineſs?

Again, Doſt thou know how near thou mayſt approach to the Truth, and yet remain ſhort of it? how far thou mayſt walk in a way like *the ſtrait way*, and yet it not prove the way? how high thou mayſt aſcend on the *ladder* (which ſeemingly to thee leads up to Heaven) and yet that not prove the ladder? There is no *Chriſt* can ſave but *the Lords anointed*, nor can he ſave any otherwiſe then by his anointing thee in the Name and with the Nature of the Lord; *He ſhall ſave becauſe of the anointing*. Thou mayſt have all the ſimilitudes of Truth and Salvation in every kind, and yet not one ſpark of Truth in any kind. Thou mayſt have light, great light, which thou mayſt confidently beleeve to be *the light of the Lord*, and yet it may not prove ſo: Thou mayſt

have fresh and vigorous life, and yet not that life prove the life of the Spirit neither; And if so, then all the motions of this life, all thy steps in this light, will not lead thee towards, but further from the Lord. Thou mayst offer sacrifices, and yet those sacrifices not be the Lords, though in thine appearance instituted by him, and by thee dedicated to him: Thou mayst season them with salt, and offer them up with fire on that which thou takest to be the Lords altar, and yet neither that salt, that fire, nor that alter be the Lords. To come yet nearer, Thou mayst have faith in God through Christ, love to God and the Saints, peace in thine own spirit, rest and joy in beleeving and obeying the voyce of the Lord, and all these very pure and spiritual in thine own view, and yet not so before the Lord who knoweth things, and cannot be deceived with vain appearances. In a word, Thou mayst come *from a Land of bondage, through a wilderness, into a state and condition of rest*; and yet this may not be the child of the Lord whom he called out of *Egypt* (*out of Egypt have I called my Son,*) nor this *Egypt* the *Egypt* out of which he calleth his Son, nor this state of rest Gods Canaan, *Gods holy Land* unto which he leads his son. There are *Egypts* (states and places of bondage) for the spirit of man: There are *wildernesses*, thousands of wildernesses (as there were many wildernesses in the world besides that which *Israel* passed through) in which the spirit of man may be entangled, and through which he may travel, and after his passage through them may find a condition of *rest*. But yet the Lords *Egypt*, the Lords Wilderness, the Lords *Canaan* are different from these, as they are prepared for a different end, namely, the subjection, the correction and enlargement of his son.

There

There is a threefold ſtate of perſons ſtanding for life; There are three ſorts of Runners, all which make account to obtain, but only one of them can.

1. There is *the pure extract of this Earth*, the natural man, him I mean (not whom thou art apt to call ſo, but he) who notwithſtanding all his Religion (all his devotion, his reading the Scripture, his praying, hearing, beleeving, &c.) in the eye of God is ſo, and by his tryal will be found ſo. This man, though he be very zealous, yet he hath no more Religion in him, then the ſpirit of man, by ſerious conſideration with himſelf, and by ſolid meditations on the Scriptures, may attain to. This man, finding a neceſſity of beleeving, and juſt ground for it, cannot but beleeve, cannot but love, cannot but ſtrive after obedience, in the midſt of all incumbrances and hangings back; his ſpirit, thus lighted, convinceth, perſwadeth, and thus directeth him. This man makes no queſtion of acceptance here, and of enjoying God hereafter. Of this ſort is the greateſt part of Religious perſons upon the face of the Earth, though becauſe the ſpirit of man is more enlightened and heightened in ſome then in others, therefore ſome are apt exceedingly to juſtifie themſelves and condemn others; calling the Religion of others formal and earthly, little ſuſpecting that their own is ſo, not only in its moſt ſublime outgoings, but even in its very root.

2. There is *an heavenly kind of birth*, from an heavenly gift, from a gift of a new life as it were, from a light let from God into the Soul, which ſhining about it and quickening it, which ſhewing it the world to come, and letting in the powers of it, muſt needs make great changes in it, and beget an higher faith, love and obedience then the former. Theſe make no queſtion

but that *theirs is the Kingdom*, and yet these may *fall away and miss of it*, as is testified *Heb.6.* and what if they had kept their standing, can a nature subject to change inherit Eternity? In rewards appertaining to Dispensations there may be loss or gain, but in *eternal life* there comes in no consideration of the motions of the creature, but it is *the free gift of God through Jesus Christ*, which he that well understandeth can unfold many riddles, wherein the spirit of man must needs be entangled and lost.

3. There is *a birth from a new nature*, from the life of God sown and springing up in the Soul, which seed contains in it and brings forth faith and love, and every other spiritual thing, *Joh.1. 12, 13.* This man is not changed either by outward Reason or inward impressions from Nature or Scriptures, or by a gift of light let into his spirit; but by the true Nature of God shed into him, and swallowing him up into it, and bringing him forth anew in it. This is the only change, (for all other changes will return again to their principles:) The others make real changes in their kind, but this alone is the perfect kind of change, this only is true, full, lasting, consisting of the very Nature and Life of God, and therefore must of necessity abide with it, and admit of no change but what it is also capable of.

Now what is thy Religion? what image, what superscription beareth it? How rare is it to find the natural Religion of the spirit of man fairly improved and well grown? Alas, the Religion now abroad cannot justly satisfie the plain honest spirit of natural man! but where shall we find the second kind? and if we be put to it for the second, where shall we seek for the third?

The

The preſent eſtate of Religion is exceeding ſick and weak. Religion hath loſt its firſt light, its firſt life, its firſt ſtrength and vigor. True Religion eats out the life and ſtrength of man, bringing forth a life of another nature; but where is there any Religion now which floweth out from the nature of man, which would eaſily be acknowledged, were the nature of man rightly meaſured and underſtood? We have indeed a great deal of humane knowledg of the things of God, a great many fleſhly fabricks, but who can produce one ſpiritual building? The beſt ſymptomes that I find of Religion, are its ſickneſs, its languiſhing. That which flouriſheth and boaſteth it ſelf ſo much, ſavoreth too ſtrongly of the fleſh to paſs for currant.

But alas, *who is truly ſick!* We want a *Phyſician*, but who is prepared for the Phyſician! what work were there as yet for him, ſhould he come but to wound, for who among the wounded hath his wound upon him?

I do not delight to afflict the ſpirits of men: but I confeſs it much grieves me to ſee them ſo greedily run after vanity, kindling ſuch ſparks, and walking in the light of ſuch a fire, as ſerves only to lull themſelves aſleep at preſent with, but will not ſecure them from the bed of abiding ſorrow. Read that place, *Iſai.*50.11. *Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compaſs your ſelves about with ſparks: Walk in the light of your fire, and in the ſparks that ye have kindled. This ſhall ye have of mine hand, ye ſhall lie down in ſorrow.* I am aſſured in my Soul that the Religion abroad will not ſave men; that under their profeſſions and practiſes of holineſs there is a root of wickedneſs which muſt to Hell, and they in whom it is found. It is not all the knowledg of Chriſt, nor faith

nor love, not all the exercises of Religion of the common kind, that will save; but a new life, a new spirit, a renewed nature, which is a rarer thing then we commonly think for.

Being thus wounded, being thus afflicted for you, will ye think much that I speak a little to you, because it sounds somewhat harsh in your ears, because it strikes at the foundation not of your outward worship (which ye cannot bear neither) but the very life and hope of your Souls? I am jealous over you, I would not have you cozened of eternal life, I would not have you trifle away your Souls in a dream. I would have you saved, therefore do I tell you of a deeper wound (which your sickness requires) then ye have yet been acquainted with. I would have you found for ever, therefore do I tell you of your lost estate, therefore do I strive to heave up that vail of seeming safety and happiness which covers your true misery from your eyes, and makes you run dancing into your own utter ruine.

Look upon the primitive Christians (ye pretend to be successors to them) where is the *truth* of that life which they once had? It is true, they had *spots* as well as you; but as your life is not their life, so your spots are not their spots. Ye confess ye want many circumstantials (tending to the outward glory of that state) which they had; but do ye not want the inward substance of that life which tends to the very Being of that state? (O Sirs, consider it, All the wit of man, All the art of man, All the serious industry of mans spirit, can never lay one stone in this building!) I will mention a few differences between us and them, and consider ye of what force they be. If any shall contend that there is no such difference, but his Religion is the same in these respects,

reſpects, I have nothing further to ſay againſt him, I have but given in my teſtimony, which is only ſo far valid as my ſpirit hath in true judgment ſearched and weighed this thing: nor doth it poſitively conclude againſt all Religion, No, It rather beleeveth that there is a ſeed of Truth ſomewhere, though deeply hid.

The eſpecial differences (or at leaſt ſome of them) which I have obſerved between Religion in its firſt birth and growth, and now in its ſtate of depravation or weak reſtitution by mans endeavors, are theſe, or in theſe reſpects.

1. It differs *in its deſcent.* That came down from God, The *ſacrifices* therein were appointed by God, The *fire* which kindled their ſacrifices was let down from Heaven: The Religion now extant is generally of the Earth, of mans pumping up from thence, which man is not able to juſtifie to be the ſame with the former, though every ſort would fain have theirs acknowledged to be ſo. There is indeed ſome kind of likeneſs, in ſome reſpects, in every way of Doctrine and Worſhip which man formeth out of the Scripture: but it is not *the life, the ſubſtance, the truth, the Religion* which the Lord once formed, and which the Lord alone can form again.

2. It differs *in its nature or principle.* That as it was from Heaven, ſo it was *heavenly:* There was *a ſeed of God, a ſeed of life,* which was ſown and ſprang up then. Now there is much natural, much artificial devotion, but it hath not this nature in it: The *repentance,* the *mortification,* the *ſelf-denyal,* &c. of this age, beareth not the image of the former. It is ſuch a kind of thing as may deſerve ſuch a name here in this world, but not being ſet by the other. I do not ſay there is no ſuch thing

thing now as the former principle, I rather beleeve the contrary: but I confeſs I think it very rare, and hardly viſible ſo much as to it ſelf.

3. It differs *in its guide.* That life had a guide, It had the Spirit of life to guide it: The life now, where it may be beſt ſuppoſed to be, is at a loſs; And though it may be given to the Spirit to be preſerved, yet the Spirit is not given to it to make uſe of. No life now runs ſo high and pure, as to be entruſted with the Spirit. It may be ſecretly led into faith, into love, into prayer, into obedience by the Spirit, but it knoweth not that it is ſo, or its own motions when they are ſo. We are fain to take it for granted that our prayers and motions are ſuch; And when the natural or artificial fire burns in us any thing warmly (much more if our ſpirits be much heated) we readily take it for granted, without through ſearching, without true diſcerning (which is too difficult and coſtly) whether this be the heat, the warmth, the life of the Spirit or no?

4. It differs *in its light.* They had a light ſuitable to their nature, ſuitable to their eye, ſuitable to the divine Spirit in them: We have a light ſuitable to our nature, ſuitable to our eye, ſuitable to our humane ſpirit: We ſee things juſt as other men ſee them; We reaſon our ſelves into truths and practiſes, as any other man might do. I do not ſay that this ſhould not be done (for the humane ſpirit is to go along, and to have its own light with it too,) but I cannot but ſay, that this is not enough.

5. It differs *in the things converſed with.* They were led into and did walk in the *ſubſtance* of things: They felt the *nature*, the *truth*, the *power* of Salvation: The life in them taſted and enjoyed the life of God in Chriſt.

Chriſt. They did not take it for granted that God was a Father, and that Chriſt was a Saviour, and was ſet up by God to diſpenſe eternal life; but they were in his Fatherhood, they were in Chriſt, and had the eternal life of God and Chriſt in them. *They knew that they were of God, and that the Son of God was come, who gave them an underſtanding to know him that is true; and that they were in him that is true, in his Son Jeſus Chriſt.* (And this was no high-flown fancy concerning God and eternal life, which conſiſts only in the elevation of the imagination, but the truth.) *This is the true God, and eternal life,* 1 *Joh.*5.19,20.

What ſhall we ſay then to theſe things? Is it not time for us to make a ſtand, and look about us? Is it not time for us to miſs *the Lord*, and ſeek to begin with him? Man is naturally confident, and yet commonly deceived in the ground-work of his confidence. From our firſt ſpringing up in Popery unto all our rents and diviſions thence both in Doctrine and Worſhip, we have ſtill been confident, that we have always been in the right. How vain is man! In every change he confeſſeth himſelf wrong, and yet that ſtill to which he changeth muſt needs be right. Ah wretched man, There is *a lye in thy heart*, which ſprings up in all thy thoughts and ways of devotion; and until thou beeſt new formed, thou wilt not be capable of entertaining the truth, but only of deluding thy ſelf! What ſhould I adviſe thee? what can be proper for thee, but to examine the true ground, and joyn with *the houſe of Iſrael in lamenting after the Lord?* to bewail the loſs of *his light, his life, his guidance, his preſence?* The cauſe of joy is not the cauſe of grief only is, and is in abundance; and where it is manifeſted with demonſtration and

power, there will not need any exhortation to it. I muſt profeſs, I would rather chuſe tears, although I were ſure they ſhould never be wiped away from mine eyes, after ſubſtance, after that which my ſpirit wants, and can alone take up with, then the greateſt mirth or pleaſure which vanity (for ſuch I account all the Religion of man, with all that ſprings from it) can afford.

Rejoyce in the Lord always. They might well rejoyce always in the Lord, who enjoyed the Lord, who had a kind of conſtant preſence of the *Bridegroom* in their ſpirits. Their Lord lived in them, walked with them, and kept them company by his Spirit. But is this ſpoken to us who are Orphans? (Though the ſpirit of man, in his ſeveral ways of Religion, is not an Orphan, therefore he may rejoyce alſo.) The ſame Spirit of the Lord which piped unto the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians, adminiſtring unto them occaſion of dancing, mourneth unto us, and our proper way of anſwering it is in lamentation.

Lament therefore after the Lord, and *mourn over Jeruſalem.* Mourn over the ruines and deſolations of *Jeruſalem: Pity the duſt of Sion. Jeruſalem* hath been layd waſte, *Sion* lieth in the duſt, nay *Sion* is it ſelf burnt into duſt by the extream jealouſie and fury of the Eternal, who hath let out his flames more fiercely upon her, then upon any abomination to be found among men. *Jeruſalem hath drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury,* yea *it hath drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out,* Iſai. 52. 17. Yet ſhe is ſtill *Jeruſalem,* ſhe is ſtill *Sion,* and her very *duſt* is lovely. The Lord knoweth her, and loveth her duſt: and it is impoſſible for any to diſcover her native worth and beauty,

ty, and not to pity and mourn over her present condition. What, is this the Lords darling, is this the only beauty, will ſcoffing earth ſay? *Iſhmael* cannot but deſpiſe *Iſaac* though growing, though thriving, though owned by the Lord; how contemptible then muſt he needs be in his death and burial? The world (wanting the inward eye) wonders to hear God ſpeak ſuch great things of his people, of the abundantly rich glory and excellency of *their life*, they appear ſo mean to them at the beſt. They never have the lovelineſs of man in them; how loathſom then muſt they needs be, when all that which is their own beauty is broken down in them! when the remainders of their earthly beauty, with the whole frame of their ſpiritual beauty, is daſhed in peeces *like a potters veſſel*, and burnt up together? Yet how precious is the ſeed of God under all theſe! how amiable is this very duſt of *Sion!* The very brokenneſs, ſickneſs, miſery of this eſtate, is of more true value then all the ſoundneſs, then all the health of life and Salvation that is any where elſe to be found throughout the whole Earth. Yet this object is very lamentable, and it would grieve any ones heart to behold it. He who hath ſeen, known, taſted or had the leaſt glimpſe of *Sion* in her glory, O how would his heart throb at the view of her here! yet here, if not here alone, is ſhe to be found.

Is it nothing to thee, *O thou Preſerver of man*, that the *foundations* of thine *own holy Habitation* are thus ſhaken? Where is *thy Zeal?* where is *the ſounding of thy Bowels* at the death and miſery of thine own ſeed? O Lord, wilt thou alſo *bring forth children to the Murtherer?* Awake, *O Lord*, Rouze up thy ſelf; Let thine own *everlaſting Spirit* ſtir in the motions of its own life,

life; and never leave till it hath raised up *disconsolate Jerusalem* (desolate *Jerusalem*, afflicted *Jerusalem*, distracted *Jerusalem*, *Jerusalem* which is sunk, dead and rotten, *Jerusalem* which is not) and hath made it *the praise of the whole Earth*. AMEN.

FINIS.